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Principles of the interior

PRINCIPLES

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OF THE

INTERIOR OR HIDDEN LIFE,

DESIGNED PARTICULARLY FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING ASSURANCE OF FAITH AND PERFECT LOVE.

BY THOMAS C. UPHAM.

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It is the object of the present Work to aid in promoting Holy Living. It will be noticed, that the principles of the Work take for granted, and every where imply, that man ought to be, and may be holy. Holiness is the one great thing, for which, above all others, man should live. It has been my desire in the following pages, some of which have already appeared in a periodical publication, to promote this great result.

There are reasons of a personal nature, why I should not have written. There are other reasons, which none can appreciate but myself, which seemed to me imperatively to require it. If what is said is true, nothing but good can ultimately flow from it. If it be otherwise, it is my earnest supplication that He, who can bring good out of evil, will overrule the mistakes of human infirmity to the glory of his own name.

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PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERIOR OR HIDDEN LIFE.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Some Marks or Traits of the Hidden Life.

THERE is a modification or form of religious experience which may conveniently, and probably with a considerable degree of propriety, be denominated the Interior or Hidden Life. When a person first becomes distinctly conscious of his sinfulness, and in connection with this experience, exercises faith in Christ as a Savior from sin, there is no doubt, however feeble these early exercises may be, that he has truly entered upon a new life. But this new life, although it is in its element different from that of the world, is only in its beginning. It embraces, undoubtedly, the true principle of a restored and renovated existence, which in due time will expand itself into heights and depths of knowledge and of feeling; but it is now only in a state of incipiency, maintaining, and often times but feebly maintaining a war with the anterior or natural life, and being nothing more at present than the early rays and dawnings of the brighter day that is coming.

It is not so with what may be conveniently denominated the Hidden Life; a form of expression which we employ to indicate a degree of Christian experience, greatly in advance of that, which so often lingers darkly and doubtfully at the threshold of the Christian's career. As the Hidden Life, as we now employ the expressions, indicates a greatly advanced state of religious feeling, resulting in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind, we may perhaps regard the Psalmist, who had a large share of this interior experience, as making an indistinct allusion to it when he says "Thou art my HIDING place, and my shield." And again "He that dwelleth in the SECRET PLACE of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Perhaps the Apostle Paul makes some allusion to this more advanced and matured condition of the religious life, when in the Epistle to the Galatians, he says "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME." And again, addressing the Colossians, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD." And does not the Savior himself sometimes recognize the existence of an Interior or Hidden Life, unknown to the world, and unknown, to a considerable extent, even to many that are denominated Christians, but who are yet in the beginning of their christian career? "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of

the HIDDEN MANNA, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which *no man knoweth, save he that* RECEIVETH it."

The phrase Hidden Life, which is appropriately and peculiarly the life of all those, who, advancing beyond the first elements of Christianity, may properly be said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, indicates a vitality or living principle, which differs in various particulars from every other form of life.

In the first place, the life of those, who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, may be called a Hidden Life, because the animating principle, the vital or operative element, is not so much in itself as in another. It is a life, grafted into another life. It is the life of the soul, incorporated into the life of Christ; and in such a way, that, while it has a distinct vitality, it has so very much in the sense, in which the branch of a tree may be said to have a distinct vitality from the root. It buds, blossoms, and bears fruit in the strong basis of an eternal stock. "I am the vine," says the Savior, "ye are the branches. He, that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." This is a great mystery, but it is also a great truth. The Christian, whose "life is hid with Christ in God," can never doubt, that his spiritual existence and growth originate in and are sustained in that divine source alone.

In the second place, the life, which we are considering, may properly be called a Hidden Life, because its moving principles, its interior and pow-

erful springs of action, are not known to the world. This is what might naturally be expected from what has already been said in respect to the relation existing between a truly devoted Christian and his Savior; inasmuch as he is taken from himself and is grafted into another, and has now become a "new man in Christ Jesus." The natural man can appreciate the natural man. The man of the world can appreciate the man of the world. And it must be admitted, that he can appreciate, to a considerable extent, numbers of persons, who profess to be Christians, and who are probably to be regarded as such in the ordinary sense of the term, because the natural life still remains in them in part. There is such a mixture of worldly and religious motives in the ordinary forms of the religious state, such an impregnation of what is gracious with what is natural, that the men of the world can undoubtedly form an approximated, if not a positive estimate of the principles, which regulate the conduct of its possessors. But of the springs of movement in the purified or Hidden Life, except by dark and uncertain conjecture, they know comparatively nothing. Little can the men, who under the teachings of nature have been trained up to the reception and love of the doctrine, which inculcates "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," appreciate the evangelical precept, which requires us, when we are assaulted, "to turn the other cheek." Still feebler and more imperfect is the idea, which they form of that ennobling Christian philosophy,

which inculcates the love of holiness for holiness' sake. They are entirely at a loss, and on any principles with which they are at present acquainted, they ever must be at a loss, in their estimate of that intimacy and sacredness of friendship, which exists between God and the sanctified mind. Rightly is it said in the Scriptures, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Again, the Hidden life has a claim to the descriptive epithet, which we have proposed to apply to it, because, in its results upon individual minds, it is directly the reverse of the life of the world. The natural life seeks notoriety. Desirous of human applause, it aims to clothe itself in purple and fine linen. It covets a position in the market place and at the corners of the streets. It loves to be called Rabbi. But the life of God in the soul, occupied with a divine companionship, avoids all unnecessary familiarities with men. It pursues a lowly and retired course. It obeys the precept of the Saviour, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and pray to thy Father, who seeth in secret". It neither desires to see nor to be seen openly, except when and where duty calls it. It is willing to be little, to be unhonored, and to be cast out from among men. It has no eye for worldly pomp; no ear for worldly applause. It is formed on the model of the Saviour, who was a man unknown. He came into the world, the highest personage on the

highest errand; and yet so humble in origin, so simple in appearance, so gentle in heart and manners, that the world could not comprehend him; and he was ever a sealed book, except to those, who had the key of the inner life to open it with.

In close connection with what has been said, we may remark further, that the hidden life of religion is not identical with the place and with the formalities and observances of religion; nor is it necessarily dependent upon them. If it were so, it would no longer be hidden: but would be as much exposed to notice, as that which is most expansive and attractive in the outward temple and in the external formality. It is true that places of worship and the various outward formalities of worship may be its handmaids, and oftentimes very important ones; but they are not its essence. It has no essence, but its own spiritual nature, and no true locality but the soul, which it sanctifies. It may be found, therefore, among all classes of men and consequently in all places, occupying equally the purple of the king and the rags of a beggar; prostrating itself at the altar of the cathedral, or offering its prayer in the humble conventicle in the wilderness; like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, and "ye know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." And, therefore, being what the Savior has denominated it, "THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHIN YOU," and essentially independent of outward circumstances, it possesses a perpetual vitality. It cannot die, for the vivifying breath of God is in it. And hence it is,

that in the most disastrous periods of the church, there have always been some, (a seven thousand perhaps,) who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Ministers may have become corrupt; churches may have been infected with unholy leaven; the rich and the learned may have been unanimous in their rejection of every thing except the mere superficialities of religion; and yet it will be found that God, who values the blood of his beloved Son too highly to let it remain inoperative, has raised his altar in individual hearts. In the dwellings of the poor, in solitary places, in the recesses of vallies and mountains, he has written his name upon regenerated minds; and the incense of their adoration, remote from public notice, has gone silently up to heaven.

These are general views and remarks, which will perhaps be better understood in the result. We do not think it necessary to dwell upon them longer at present. In conclusion, we would say, however, that the true Hidden Life has its PRINCIPLES; principles of origin and principles of perpetuity. The popular Christianity, that which exists in great numbers of the professed followers of Christ, has sometimes seemed to those, who have looked into its nature, to be a sort of chaos, entirely irregular and confused, "without form and void." The measurement, and almost the only measurement of its vitality, is excitation, temporary emotion. It is driven downward and upward, backward, forward, and transversely, by the blind

impulse of emotive power. So that if we seek it here, supposing it has a fixed principle of movement which will help to designate where it is, it is gone somewhere else; and if we seek it somewhere else, it has already altered its position. The true Hidden Life, refusing to be characterised by the fatal mark of inconstancy, has cast anchor in God; and its principles are the strong cable, which holds it there. This is one thing, which, if we estimate the subject correctly, the church of God are called upon to learn more fully, viz. that the true life of God in the soul has its principles; principles founded in wisdom; principles fixed and inflexible.

God never made a stone, an herb, a blade of grass, or any natural thing however insignificant; nor does he sustain it for a moment, without a principle of action. It is impossible for God to operate accidentally. Whatever he does, He does by principle. And if this is true in natural things, it is equally so in spiritual things. God did not make; and does not sustain the soul by accident. Nor does He raise it from its fallen condition; rekindle within it a renovated life; and bear it onward to present and eternal victory by a fortuitous aid, an accidental fatality. The new life in the soul, therefore, has its laws of beginning and progress, as well as every other form of life.

CHAPTER SECOND.

On the Doctrine of Holiness.

HAVING in the preceding chapter given some general idea of the Interior or Hidden Life, the important inquiry naturally suggests itself; In what way shall we gain admission into this desirable state? The Gospel evidently contemplates, in the case of every individual, a progress from the incipient condition of mere forgiveness and acceptance, immensely important as it is, to the higher state of interior renovation and sanctification throughout. The Apostle appears to have reference to this onward progress of the soul in the expressions he employs in the commencement of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of baptism and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit." What direction, then, shall we take? What course shall we pursue, that we may rise above the merely initiatory principles and feelings of

the gospel life, and enjoy the delightful privilege of walking in close and uninterrupted communion with God? In answer to this general inquiry we remark, that the first and indispensable prerequisite is HOLINESS OF HEART. It is generally supposed, that God may exhibit pity and pardon to those, in whom there still exist some relics and stains of inward corruption; in other words, that those, may be forgiven or pardoned, who are not entirely sanctified. But those, who would walk acceptably with their Maker, who would receive from him his secret communications and enjoy the hidden embraces of his love, must see to it, first of all, that they are *pure in heart*; that they have a present, as well as a prospective salvation; in other words, that they are holy.

We are aware, that, in the view of some, this condition of realizing the full life of God in the soul is an impracticable one. They regard holiness in this life, as a thing unattainable; or, what seems to me to be *practically* the same view, as a thing never attained. The persons, to whom we now allude, seem to look upon holiness as a sort of intangible abstraction, as something placed high and remotely in the distance, as designed to be realized by angels and by the just made perfect in heaven, but situated far beyond mere human acquisition. Hence it is, that followed and scourged by an inward condemnation, they remain in the condition of servants, and do not cheerfully and boldly take that of sons. They wander about, oftentimes led captive by

Satan, in the low grounds of the gospel life, amid marshes and tangled forests; and do not ascend into the pleasant hills and that emblematical land of Beulah, where are spicy breezes and perpetual sunshine.

In this state of things, it will be readily seen that it is necessary to delay a short time here. It becomes a very important inquiry, whether holiness, in any strict and proper sense of that term, is something attainable in the present life. Among other reasons it is important to be able to answer properly this question, because, unless we believe in the attainableness of holiness, we shall not be likely, such are the laws of the human mind, to attain it. Perhaps we may say, that without this belief it will be *impossible* to attain it. And without holiness, without a heart thoroughly purified from the stains of voluntary transgression, we may be assured that we shall not enter into the secrets of the Most High; the Hidden Life will be hidden to us: and there will be many things in the Christian's privileges, more precious than rubies, which will never, in the present state of being, come within the range of our experience.

But before we can decide whether holiness is attainable, we must endeavor to form some definite conception of its nature. And here it may be proper to remark, that we are obliged to travel over ground which has already been repeatedly occupied by former writers. We shall, therefore, be as concise, as will be at all consistent with giving any thing like a correct idea of the subject.

First.—And in the first place, we proceed to remark, that the holiness, which Christ requires in his people, and which, in order to distinguish it from Adamic perfection, is sometimes designated as evangelical or gospel holiness, does not necessarily imply a perfection of the physical system. Adam, before his fall, was a perfect man physically as well as mentally. His senses were sound; his limbs symmetrical; his muscular powers uninjured; and in all merely corporeal or physical respects, we may reasonably suppose, that he possessed all that could be desired. But this is not our present condition. Far from it. In consequence of the fall of Adam, we inherit bodies that are subject to various weaknesses and infirmities. Many are called, in the Providence of God, to endure a great degree of suffering through the whole course of their days. These weaknesses and infirmities, which are often the source of great perplexity and suffering, are natural to us. To a considerable extent at least, we cannot prevent their coming; nor, when they have come, can we, by any mere voluntary acts, send them away. We admit, therefore, if gospel holiness necessarily implies physical perfection, that none can be holy. But this is not the case.

Second.—We remark, in the second place, that evangelical or gospel holiness does not necessarily imply a perfection of the intellect, either in its perceptive or in its comparing and judging powers. The perfection of the intellectual action depends in

part on the perfection of physical action; on the perfection, for instance, of the organs of sense, the organs of the sight, hearing, and touch. But in our present fallen condition, it is well known that these and other physical instrumentalities, which have a greater or less connection with the mental action, are greatly disordered. And the natural and necessary consequence of this state of things will be a degree of perplexity and obscurity in such mental action. And such is the connection of the powers of the mind, one with another, that an erroneous action in one part of the mind will be likely to lay the foundation for a degree of erroneous action in some other part. Hence in the present life a perfect knowledge of things, either in themselves or in their relations, may be regarded in the light of a physical impossibility. And such perfect knowledge, in which there is not the least possible mistake or error, does not appear to be required of us in the gospel, as a necessary condition of holiness and of acceptance with God.

It may be added here, that in this respect also our condition appears to differ from that of our first parent. Adam, it is true, did not possess omniscience, but within the range of his perceptive powers he was not subject to error. So far as God permitted him to know at all, he knew correctly. So that relatively to the sphere of his ability and action, he was as perfect intellectually, as he was corporeally and physically.

THIRD.—In the third place, there is ground for saying, that the holiness which, in accordance

with the principles of the gospel, is required to be exercised in the present life, differs in some respects from the holiness or sanctification of a future life. It is important to add, however, that it does not differ in its *nature;* but only in some of its accessories or incidents. In its nature holiness ever will be, and ever must be the same; but it may differ in some of the attendant circumstances or incidents, under which it exists. One of the particulars of an accessory or incidental character, in which the holiness of the future life may be regarded as differing from that of the present, is, that it is not liable, by any possibility whatever, to any interruption or suspension. No physical infirmity, no weariness or perplexity, of body or of mind, nothing will ever, even for a moment, either vitiate or weaken the purity of its exercises. The spiritual body, which constitutes the residence of the soul in its heavenly state, accelerates and perfects its operations, instead of retarding and perplexing them; so that its purity is always unstained, its joy always full, the song of its worship always new. Another ground of difference between the sanctification or holiness of the present and that of the future life is to be found in the circumstance, that in the present life we are subject to perpetual and heavy temptations. No one, however advanced in religious experience, is wholly exempt from them. On the contrary, persons, who are the most holy, often endure temptations of the severest kind. But it is not so in the heavenly world. In that happier place the contest ceases forever.

There is not only no sin, and no possibility of sinning; but no temptation to sin. While, therefore, we hold to the possibility of a freedom from actual voluntary transgression in this life, it ought to be understood that we do not hold to a freedom from temptation. So that we may speak of the continuance of the spiritual warfare in the present life, as a matter of necessity, but not of the continuance of sin as a matter of necessity.

We may also admit, in addition to what has been remarked, that all mere physical infirmities, which originate in our fallen condition, but which necessarily prevent our doing for God what we should otherwise do; and also all unavoidable errors and imperfections of judgment, which in their ultimate causes result from sin, (we have reference here to Adam's sin,) *require an atonement.* It seems to be clear, that God constituted the human race on the principle of an unity, or perhaps more precisely, of a close connection, of obligations and interests; linking together man with man, as with bands of iron, in the various civil, social, and domestic relations. And in consequence of the existence of the great connective laws of nature, (laws which our own judgments and consciences alike approve,) it seems to be the case, that we may sometimes justly suffer, in our own persons, results which are of a punitive kind, although in their source flowing from the evil conduct of others rather than our own. And hence it is that the head of a family ordinarily does not sin, without affecting the happiness of its members. Nor does any

member of the family ordinarily sin without involving others in the consequences of the transgression. Nor does the head of a community, or of a State, or of any other associated body, commit errors and crimes without a diffusion of the attendant misery through the subordinate parts of the association. In other words, an union or association of relations and interests, whether it be established by ourselves or by that higher Being with whose wisdom we ought ever to be satisfied, necessarily induces a common liability to error, suffering, and punishment.

And in accordance with this view, we may very properly, sincerely, and deeply mourn over those various infirmities and imperfections, which flow out of our connection with an erring and fallen parent, although they are very different in their nature from deliberate and voluntary transgressions; and may with deep humility make application to the blood of Christ, as alone possessing that atoning efficacy, which can wash their stains away. In other words, God is to be regarded as righteous in exacting from us whatever we could or might have rendered him if Adam had not fallen, and if the race had remained holy. Nevertheless he has mercifully seen fit to remit or forgive all these involuntary sins, more commonly and perhaps more justly called imperfections or trespasses, if we will but cordially accept of the atonement in the blood of Christ. But without the shedding of blood and confession, there is no more remission in this case than in any other. It is probably in refer-

ence to such imperfections or trespasses, rather than to sins of a deliberate and voluntary nature, that some good people speak of the moral certainty or necessity we are under of sinning all the time. If such is all their meaning, it is not very necessary to dispute with them.

What, then, after these various remarks and explanations, is the nature of Christian perfection, or of that holiness, which, as fallen and as physically and intellectually imperfect creatures, we are imperatively required and expected to exercise; and to exercise not merely in the "article of death," but at the present moment and during every succeeding moment of our lives? It is on a question of this nature, if on any one which can possibly be proposed to the human understanding, that we must go to the Bible; and must humbly receive, irrespective of human suggestions and human opinions, the answer which the word of God gives. Happily for us, and happily for the world, this question is answered by the Savior himself; and in such a way as to leave the subject clear and satisfactory to humble and candid minds. When the Savior was asked, Which is the great commandment in the Law, he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*" Matt. xxii. 37–8–9. And it is in accordance with the truth, involved in this remarkable passage, that

the apostle asserts, Rom. xiii. 10, "*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*"

He, therefore, who loves God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself, although his state may in some incidental respects be different from that of Adam, and especially from that of the angels in heaven, and although he may be the subject of involuntary imperfections and infirmities, which, in consequence of his relation to Adam, require confession and atonement, is, nevertheless, in the gospel sense of the terms, a holy or sanctified person. He has that love, which is the "fulfilling of the law." He bears the image of Christ. It is true, he may not have that physical or intellectual perfection which the Savior had; but he bears his moral image. And of such an one can it be said in the delightful words of the Saviour, John xiv. 23: "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Holiness, as the term has now been explained, in other words, pure and perfect love, is required of all persons. We do not esteem it necessary to delay and repeat all the passages, in which the requisition is made. It is written very plainly upon all parts of the Bible, from the beginning to the end of it. "But as he, which hath called you, is holy," says the apostle Peter, "so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy." All, therefore, which we have to say further at the present time is this: Those, who aim at the possession of the Hidden

Life, who wish to walk with God and to hold communion with him in the interior man, as a friend converses with a friend, will find these glorious results impossible to them, except on the condition of HOLINESS OF HEART. So long as they indulge voluntarily in any known sin, they erect a wall of separation between themselves and their heavenly Father; and he cannot and will not take them into his bosom, and reveal to them the hidden secrets of his love. They must stand far off; we do not say that they are utterly rejected; but they occupy the position of their own selection; obscure and perplexed in their own experience, and darkness and perplexity to all around them.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Directions to aid in the attainment of Holiness.

Having in the second Chapter attempted to show, that the higher realizations of the religious life, those in which the wall of separation is broken down and the fallen spirit of man emerges into unity with its maker, can exist only in connection with holiness of heart, the next important question to be considered is, How we may attain to a state of holiness? How may we experience the desirable change from weakness of faith to assurance of faith, from a weak and vacillating love to perfection of love, or, what is to be regarded as essentially the same thing, from a partial to a state of entire sanctification? In reply to this interesting inquiry, we proceed to remark, that there are three things, upon which, in connection with the operations and influences of the Holy Spirit, this great result seems especially to depend.

First.—And the first is a belief in the attainableness of sanctification or holiness at the present time.

There are two acknowledged principles in the philosophy of the human mind, which have an im-

portant connection with such belief. The first is, that we never can feel under moral obligation to do a thing which we believe impossible to be done. Now the popular doctrine, that no man ever has been sanctified, or ever will be sanctified, till the moment of death, places, in the view of the common mind, the opposite doctrine, viz. that sanctification is attainable at any period of life, in the light of an impossibility. The idea, that no man has been sanctified or will be sanctified till death, is inexplicable in the view of men generally, except on the ground that there is some insuperable obstacle in the way of it, although they may not readily perceive or explain what that obstacle is. The conviction of the impossibility of present sanctification will exist in the common mind as it has done in times past, just so long as the popular doctrine, that there have not been and never will be cases of it, prevails. And the consequence is, as might naturally be expected, that throughout a great proportion of the churches the sense of obligation to be holy is very feeble. It is not wrought into the mind; it does not weigh upon it heavily, and give it no rest. Nor is it possible on the principles of mental philosophy that it should, while the common notions on this subject remain. Men will never feel the obligation to be what they believe it impossible for them to be.—Now this great work of holiness, we venture to say, will never be accomplished in us without a deep sense of our obligation to be holy.

Another principle, involved in the philosophy of

the mind, and having a connection with this subject, is this: No person, such is the relation between the will and belief, can put forth a volition to do a thing, which at the same time he believes impossible to be done. I do not believe, for instance, in the possibility of flying in the air; and I am unable to put forth a volition to do any such thing. I may exercise a *desire* to fly in the air; but while I have an utter disbelief in its possibility, I shall never put forth a volition to do it. So if I disbelieve in the possibility of being holy, I can never put forth a volition, that is to say, a fixed determination, to be so. I may put forth a volition to do many good things; I may put forth a volition to grow in grace; but to put forth a volition, a fixed, unalterable determination, with divine assistance, to resist and overcome every sin, to be wholly the Lord's, to be holy, when I believe such a result to be unattainable, is what, on the principles of the philosophy of the mind, I am unable to do. I might as well put forth a volition to create a continent, or to remove the Rocky Mountains into the Pacific Ocean, or to do any thing else, which I know it to be impossible for me to do.

Now if these two philosophical principles have been correctly stated, first, that the sense of obligation to be holy at the present time will depend on a belief in the present attainableness of holiness; and, second, that the volition or voluntary determination to be holy now, necessarily presupposes the same belief; then we see very clearly the importance of being established in this doctrine.

Who can expect to be holy now, and holy through his whole life, that does not feel the weight of obligation to be so? Still more, who can reasonably expect to be holy, that does not put forth a volition, a fixed, unalterable determination with divine assistance to be so? And if these, the obligation and the volition or fixed purpose of mind, depend on the antecedent belief, then evidently the first great preparatory step to a holy life, is, to be fully settled in the doctrine;—in other words, to believe fully in the attainableness of holiness at the present time. And this, as the matter presents itself to my own mind, is, practically, a very important conclusion. Upon the mind, that can appreciate the relation and the application of the principles which have just been laid down, the reception of the common doctrine of the impossibility of present sanctification presses with the weight of a millstone. A person in this position feels, that he cannot move; he is like a man that is shut up in prison and in irons, and in accordance with the saying, that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," he soon ceases to make effort, when there is nothing but defeat before him. We say, then, to every one, who feels the importance of this subject, and who is sincerely desirous to be holy in heart, go to the Bible. Go with a single eye. Go in the spirit of humble prayer. And see whether the Lord does not require you to be wholly his, in the exercise of assurance of faith and of perfect love;—and whether he has not, in the blood of his Son, made ample provision for this blessed result?

Second.—In answer to the question, how we may attain to holiness, we proceed to say, that a second indispensable thing is an act of personal consecration to God. Some confound such an act of consecration with the full or complete state of sanctification. But this confusion of ideas ought to be avoided. Sanctification is something more than the consecrating act. Consecration is simply putting forth the volition, (a foundation for which is now laid in the belief of the duty and the attainableness of holiness,) the fixed unalterable determination, with divine assistance, to be wholly the Lord's. In other words, it is a fixed purpose, not to be altered during the whole period of our existence, to break off from every known sin; and to walk, to the full extent of our ability, in the way of the divine requirements. God recognizes the moral agency of man, fallen as he is; and very properly calls upon him and requires him to make this consecration, however unavailable it may ultimately be without his own accessory aid. Now it does not necessarily follow, because we put forth a determination to do a thing, that the thing is done; although it is certain that the thing will never be done without the previous determination. Such a consecration, therefore, extending to all that we are and all that we have, is necessary. And let it not be said, that we have no power to make it. We are not speaking now of persons, who are in the deadness of original unconversion. We are speaking of *Christians*, of persons in a justified state, whose dead wills have been partially quick-

ened by the Holy Ghost, and who certainly can do something in this way. Such a consecration, therefore, made with the whole soul and for all coming time, is necessary.

And it is so, first, because we can have no available faith in the promises of God without it. It is a great complaint in the Christian church at the present day, that there is a want of faith. If we may take the statements of Christians themselves, they do not *believe;* certainly not as they should do. And why is it? It is because they have not fully consecrated themselves to God; in other words, they continue to indulge in some known sins. Such are the laws of the mind, that they cannot have full faith in God as a friend and father to them, so long as they are conscious of voluntarily sinning against him. The Saviour himself has distinctly recognized the principle, that faith under such circumstances is an impossibility. "How *can* ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" If we seek the honor that cometh from God, in other words, if in the fixed purpose of our minds we consecrate ourselves to him, to do, as far as in us lies, his whole will, then, and not otherwise, we can believe that he will be to us, and do for us, all that he has promised in his Holy Word. It is precisely here as it is in common life. It is impossible for us, in our intercourse of man with man, to believe that a man whom we deliberately sin against and injure, has confidence in us and loves us, provided we are certain that he has knowledge

of the fact. The principle will be found to hold good in regard to God as well as man. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they had faith in God as their father and friend. But their faith failed as soon as they had sinned; and they immediately hid themselves from his presence. If we would have faith, therefore, we must endeavor by consecration to cease from all known voluntary sin. In entire accordance with these views are the remarkable expressions in the first epistle of John. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

An act of entire consecration is necessary, so far as it is in our power to make it, secondly, because we have no encouragement to believe that God will sanctify us in the state of personal and spiritual inactivity and declension. As has already been said, God recognizes the moral agency of man, fallen as he is; and especially when, after having justified him by the application of the Saviour's blood, he has given him the principle of a new spiritual life. It is because he has given us the power of distinguishing between good and evil; because he has given us judgment and conscience and will; because he has breathed into us the breath of a new spiritual life; thereby putting us into communication with himself, and opening to us the fountains of everlasting strength, that he has the right and exercises the right of requiring us to surrender all to him. And if we find the attempt difficult, as no doubt on account of our past lives we shall be very likely to, he nevertheless requires that we shall do

all that we *can*. And it is at this point, when we have put forth, with all the energy and sincerity of our being, the unalterable determination, relying upon divine assistance, that we will be wholly his, that he meets us. The two principles of entire consecration and of divine assistance to the full extent of the promises, go together. And both are embodied in that remarkable passage of Scripture, which should be written upon the heart of every believer, "*Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*" 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

It will of course be understood, that, in making this act of consecration, we have a sincere and earnest desire for holiness. We cannot suppose it possible, that it should be made in any other state of mind.

THIRDLY.—A third thing requisite in order to present sanctification, is a full belief in the faithfulness of God in relation to the fulfillment of his promises. Having believed, first, that holiness is a duty, and that such provision is made for it as to render it attainable; and having, secondly, consecrated ourselves to God in all things to do his will, we are now, in the third place, to have faith in him, that he will do what he has voluntarily assumed as his own part; in other words, that he will fulfill the promises he has graciously made; that he will accept the sacrifice which we have deliberately laid upon his altar; and make us fully and entirely his. This is

oftentimes the most difficult thing of the whole; difficult, not in itself considered; but in consequence of our naturally fallen condition. Some, it is true, believe easily; —believe at once; and of course enter in at such an open door, that they are filled with surprise. But many stumble at this point. They feel the dreadful effects of former habits of mind. That old unbelief, which has so long kept them far from God, still clings to them. They hesitate, linger, become discouraged, and are oftentimes defeated. It is at this crisis of one's religious history, that the saying of Elizabeth to Mary has an especial meaning; "BLESSED IS SHE THAT BELIEVED."

There is one thing, in particular, which seems to render it necessary to believe that God does now accept the consecration, which is made. It is, that this belief constitutes, if we may so express it, the transition point, (or rather perhaps the transition itself,) from consecration to sanctification. In the act of consecration we solemnly promise the Lord, that, relying upon his grace, we will now and forever break off from every known sin. But in exercising faith in God as true to his promises and as giving us strength to be his and as now receiving us, we may be said in some respects to do a still greater work, viz. we renounce absolutely and entirely all self-reliance and all confidence in our own strength. And he, who breaks off from every known sin; and at the same time in full reliance upon the word of God and with childlike simplicity, leaves himself entirely and in all things in the hands of God, unresistingly to receive the suggestions and

to fulfill the guidance of the Holy Spirit, necessarily becomes, in the Scripture sense of the terms, a holy or sanctified person. He becomes so, because he is precisely in that position, in which God desires him to be, and in which the grace of God is pledged to give redemption and victory. God necessarily receives him. In other words, he passes from a state of rebellion to one of submission; from a state of unbelief to one of childlike confidence; and from himself and out of himself into God.

The difficulty of believing at this particular crisis results not only from our former habits of unbelief; but also in part, although it may seem to be a contradiction, from the extreme simplicity and facility of the thing to be done. The internal process in the minds of many persons, when they arrive at this specific point, seems to be like this. Is it possible, they say, that we can experience so great a blessing in a manner so easy, so simple, that we stumble at its very simplicity? Must we experience the great work of interior salvation in the way of renunciation, by merely giving up all and by sinking into the simplicity and nothingness of little children? Is there nothing, which is personally meritorious, nothing which is the subject of self-gratulation, neither in the beginning, nor in the progress, nor in the completion of the divine life? And thus, through the extreme goodness of God in making the way so easy, they are confused and kept back. In a word, they disbelieve, simply because in this position of their experience, nothing is required but

believing. Happy is he, who, in losing all things, gains all things. Happy is he, who alienates himself from himself, in order that God may take possession of that self, which he has renounced. Again we repeat, "Blessed is she that believed." It is in the exercise of belief, under the circumstances which we have now been considering, that we realize the full import of those striking passages of Scripture, (passages which we shall probably have occasion to remark upon hereafter) Mark xi. 24, "*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*" And 1st Epistle of John v. 15, "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*"

A faithful and *persevering* application of the principles laid down in this chapter, attended with reliance on God for his blessing, will result, we have no doubt, in leading persons into the narrow and holy way. We say *persevering* application, because in nothing is perseverance, a fixed tenacity of purpose, more desirable than in the pursuit of holiness. He, who puts his hand to the plough here, with the secret reservation that he will look back when he pleases, might as well make no beginning. There must be a fixedness of determination, which will not be discouraged by any obstacles; an inflexible will, which, with God's blessing, will continue steadfast to the end.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

On the relation of Natural and Religious Faith.

A PORTION of the remarks of the last chapter, those which have relation to our exercising trust in the divine declarations, naturally introduce us to another subject, which is of essential importance in the internal Christian life. It is not easy to appreciate fully the various practical applications and the important results, connected with the principle of FAITH. A principle so fundamental, taking precedence in the order of nature, though not in rank or degree, even of that of Love, that it would not be easy to bestow upon it too early or too careful a notice. The subject of FAITH will be repeatedly introduced in the course of this Work, and will be considered in various relations and aspects. It is our object in the present chapter, to illustrate briefly the principles and results of religious faith, by a reference to the analogy or resemblance of natural faith; in the hopes that the high place which is assigned to faith in the Scriptures, will be less objected to, when we remember, that, considered as a purely natural principle, it is one of the most powerful and wonderful principles, which our Ma-

ker has implanted within us. In other words, if we understand well what natural faith is, we have reason to think and believe, that we shall be more likely to understand and appreciate the doctrines of religious faith.

It will be noticed here, that we do not confound together Natural and Religious faith, as if they were one and the same thing. It is true there is a common nature in some respects; but the difference, nevertheless, is too great not to be distinctly recognized. We consider them, though closely connected, as evidently separate, and shall remark upon them separately and in succession.

First.—We proceed then to say, in the first place, that natural faith is the gift of God in his natural, and not in his religious dispensation of things. In other words, natural faith is a principle of our nature. It is a principle which has its origin in our mental constitution, and is sustained by its appropriate laws. It is so intimately connatural to us, and is so constantly operative, that we sometimes almost forget that we are possessed of such a principle; and we certainly have, in general, but a feeble conception of its immense influence; an influence which is felt at all times, in all situations, and among all classes. A few brief references to the actual state of things will illustrate what we mean.

The life of children, for instance, from the period of their infancy upward to the years of their departure from the parental home, is a life of faith. Not of religious faith, it is true; but still a life of

faith. How does it happen, though they are entirely dependent for food, raiment, and shelter, that they nevertheless have no trouble, no anxiety on the subject? The answer is, because they have faith. If it were not so, if they were deficient in faith, it is obvious they would be exceedingly wretched. But having entire faith in their parents, that they will provide for their wants, sympathize in their sorrows, and protect them in danger, they remain in simplicity and quietness of spirit; and in the language of Scripture, "are careful for nothing." It was the knowledge of this fact which influenced the Savior,—not exclusively, perhaps, but in part,—to direct Christians, so often and emphatically as he did, *to become like little children.*

Again, the existence and the operations of natural faith are seen in the intercourse of man with man in the relations of life and in the transactions of business. So complicated are the relations of society, and so dependent is man on his fellow man, that it is difficult to see, if man had not faith in others, how he could exist in the world for any length of time. Faith is the supporter of law and order; the basis of all contracts involving future liabilities; the strong pillar of great civil and political associations. As soon as there is a cessation or general diminution of reciprocal confidence in the community, what perplexities arise in business! What confusion and weakness in the administrators of the law! What unavoidable and general ruin!

We may add further, that faith, in its natural operation, is the strength of individuals as well as of communities. The natural man is strong in natural faith. Who expects any marked and favorable results from the man who has no faith in himself, and no faith in the business he is engaged in? It is faith in himself, which gives the true energy to his efforts. Indeed the well known law of our mental nature, which was made the subject of remark in the last chapter, shows that it must be so; viz., that as a general rule, the power of the volition, or voluntary purpose, corresponds, in any given case, to the degree of faith or belief which exists. If, for instance, we have absolutely no belief, or faith, that we are able to do a given thing, we shall find it utterly impossible to put forth a volition or fixed determination to do it: and in accordance with this view, if we have doubts of the accomplishment of an object, in other words, if our faith be weak, the decision which we form, the purpose of movement and action, will generally be found to be proportionably inefficient. And hence it is a common artifice among men, if they wish to perplex and prevent the attainment of certain objects by others, to represent such objects as exceedingly difficult, and even unattainable, on the principle that in proportion as their belief in the attainableness of the thing is weakened, their purpose and effort to attain it will be less vigorous. And on the other hand, what prodigies have been wrought by strength of faith, even *natural* faith!

How many persons have been carried, by the mere energy of this inferior form of faith, through amazing difficulties to the possession of natural and worldly objects! It was obviously faith in the practicability of his plans, which supported the great Athenian orator through the immense difficulties of his position, and placed him ultimately at the head of the Commonwealth. It was faith, operating in connection with other remarkable elements of character, which carried the armies of Hannibal over the terrific barriers of the Alps. What sustained Columbus, in his vast and untried project of attempting to find a new world, but strong, unconquerable faith in the practicability of his object? Who would meet the scorn and criticisms of men; who would endure pains of body and mind; who would undergo the perils of the ocean, the vicissitudes of climate, of hunger, thirst, and nakedness, for the attainment of an object which he believed to be impracticable, and in regard to which, therefore, he had no faith? But often, very often, have these things been done in the strength of faith. Ridicule has been met; opposition has been braved; suffering, in all the varieties of its forms, has been endured; and that, too, calmly, patiently and triumphantly, when strong faith has been the soul's support. It is faith which, in commercial enterprises, in inventions in the arts, in projects of remote discovery, in great social and political movements, makes men successful adventurers, discoverers, reformers, conquerors, martyrs. And if such are the marked re-

sults of mere natural faith, what may we not expect from the more ennobling principle of religious faith!

Second.—We proceed now to the other and more important view of the subject. Religious faith, that which enables us effectually to embrace Christ as our Savior and God as our portion, that which enables us to regard the threatenings and promises of God as present realities, is obviously not the natural inheritance of man in his present fallen state, but is the special gift of God through the operation of the Holy Spirit. In its nature, that is to say, in its purely psychological or mental development, it must be admitted that it appears to be and probably is essentially the same with natural faith; but it is modified and characterized by the important facts, that it arises on its own peculiar occasions, that it has its peculiar and appropriate objects, and that it is of divine origin. Nevertheless it remains true, notwithstanding the important distinction which has just been referred to, that religious faith, when once graciously implanted in the soul, operates, in many respects, similarly or analogously to natural faith, observing the same general laws and characterized by the same general results. A few statements will indicate and illustrate some of the leading points of analogy between the two forms of faith, and will tend to throw light upon the subject of faith in general.

(1.) In the exercise of natural faith in our parents, for instance, we have entire and unwavering confidence that they will be kind to us; that they

will watch over us and feed us; that they will clothe us and shelter us. Our faith in them is so strong, is so exclusive of any uncertainty, that it practically becomes moral certainty and knowledge. Accordingly we have no hesitancy in saying, that the country, which they inhabit, will be our country; that the hearth which beams for them will shine also for us; that the home which shelters them will shelter us. Where they go, we go; where they lodge, we lodge. Religious faith, which has a different object, nevertheless operates analogously. It attaches itself to God as its object, and recognizes him as our Father. The object is changed; the inward operation of the principle is chiefly sustained by an imparted and gracious efficacy; but the manner of the operation and the result are the same. Accordingly, when it is in full exercise, we trust, with entire assurance, all our interests in the hands of our heavenly Father; we resolve all secondary instrumentality into his instrumentality; we rejoice in him in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness; we take him as our all in all.

In the beautiful language of Madame Guyon, as it is translated by Cowper, we can say in the fullness of our hearts;

> "To me remains nor place nor time,
> "My country is in every clime;
> "I can be calm and free from care
> "On every shore, since God is there.

(2.) Again. Natural faith operates, or "works," in the Scripture form of expression, by natural

love. It is faith which, more than any thing else, holds the key that unlocks love's golden fountain. Who can love another, except, perhaps, with that lower form of love, which is synonymous with pity or sympathy, in whom he has no faith? How soon does our love to a person, to whom we were once devotedly attached, cease, when our faith in him ceases! No sooner is the confidence which we reposed in the person's truth, honor and other estimable qualities, taken away, than the love which rested upon it falls to the ground. And thus religious faith, sustained by the Holy Spirit, but operating in a manner entirely analogous, is undoubtedly the true basis of religious love. Without the key of faith, the fountain of divine love would not be opened in our hearts. It would be impossible. It is because we believe or have faith in God as just, benevolent, and holy, as possessed of every possible perfection calculated to attract and secure our love, that we love him. And it is a great and important truth, as certain on natural principles as it is on Scriptural principles, that our love will rise and fall just in proportion to our faith. If our hearts are full of love to God at the present moment, and we should the next moment cease to believe in him as a God of truth, justice and goodness, our love would necessarily terminate at once. Such is the great law of our intellectual and moral being; and such is the doctrine of the Scriptures.

(3.) We proceed to remark again, that the analogy or resemblance between natural faith and re-

ligious faith may be observed in another important particular. It is an important law of natural faith, that it acquires strength by repetition or habit. Of the existence of the law of habit, and of its extensive applications, probably no persons, who are acquainted with the operations of the human mind, will have any doubt: and in accordance with this law, every new exercise of confidence or faith in any one of our fellow men, tends to increase the confidence or faith already existing. Religious as well as natural faith may be increased by the same law and in the same manner. In other words, every new exercise of faith in God and in his great precepts and promises, which is the true idea of religious faith, increases the strength of the principle of faith. This is, practically, a very important view; and especially to those who are desirous of living a truly holy life. I am aware that the increase of religious faith, as well as its origin in the first instance, is the gift of God. But God very properly requires us to observe the laws of our mental nature, and to do what it is our privilege to do. Accordingly the blessing of God, manifested in the increase of religious faith, seems to me, as a general thing, to conform to this view; and that those and those only who, in observance of the natural law, *diligently exercise the faith they already have*, can reasonably expect to have more, either by natural increase or by special grace. And, indeed, the doctrine which has now been advanced will apply to all the Christian graces, since God no where gives encouragement, so far as we can perceive,

that he will add to the possessions of him who misimproves even his one talent. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Matt. xiii. 12.

(4.) We remark further, that religious faith, in perfect analogy to that which is natural, brings personal and mighty energy to its possessor; and places in his hand, in the sharp contest with sin and Satan, the shield of victory. It does this, among other things, and on the same principle that natural faith does, by giving exceeding power to his religious volitions or determinations. The man who has no faith, is necessarily powerless. He is smitten by the irreversible law of nature, as well as by the present and special frown of God. He lies prostrate upon the ground, a mere imbecile, useless and impracticable alike to good and evil; but he who has faith acts, and acts vigorously. Faith diffuses a calm but effective energy through the whole man: especially is this true of religious faith. He who has this faith, possesses the power of adding the infinite to the finite. He relies on the divine promises, in the occasions on which they properly apply, as things in a PRESENT fulfillment; and thus incorporates with his own comparative and acknowledged weakness, the mighty energy of a present God. And besides all this, God bestows especial honor upon those who possess religious faith. They, and they only, are his dear children. Their names are written upon his heart of infinite

love. Every element of his nature is pledged in their behalf. And hence we should not be surprised, when we consider what power faith has in itself by its natural law, and also that it takes hold of the infinite God, and enlists in our behalf his mighty heart of love, that the Holy Scriptures are sprinkled over, as it were, with illustrations and declarations of the immense efficacy and of the wonderful triumphs of this divine principle:

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
"And looks to that alone;
"Laughs at impossibilities,
"And cries, IT SHALL BE DONE."

In conclusion, we have but one remark more to make, which seems to flow naturally out of what has been said. The remark will be, in part, a repetition of what has been said in the preceding chapter; but it seems to me deserving of repeated notice and reflection. It is well understood and admitted among the believers in present sanctification, that sanctification, as well as justification, is by faith, and that it can be in no other way. Now any creed or doctrine, which, either by direct assertion or by implication, makes present sanctification, otherwise termed holiness or perfected love, a practical impossibility, necessarily excludes and annihilates all faith which is appropriate to that particular result. And on the principles which have been laid down, he, who has no faith in the present attainableness of sanctification, is necessarily deprived of the great source and instrument of sanctifying power. He lies prostrate, overwhelmed, hopeless. Can it

be surprising then, that so many Christians live in a sort of hopeless bondage to sin, when the prevalent doctrine is, that present sanctification, or sanctification antecedent to the "article of death," never has been and never will be attained? If we do not believe in the possibility of present sanctification, then we are not in a situation to put forth the fixed and irrevocable purpose or determination of mind which is requisite to a successful pursuit of it. If we do not believe in the practicability and attainableness of present sanctification, then we cannot exercise faith in those important portions of the divine word which promise it. And we see here an explanation, in part, at least, why a portion of the followers of Christ remain in great darkness and sorrow, and almost constantly under the dominion of sin, while others, operating on a different theological basis, and availing themselves of the mighty power of faith, mount upward to regions of inward light and life.

I sat me down in earth's benighted vale,
And had no courage and no strength to rise;
Sad to the passing breeze I told my tale,
And bowed my head and drained my weeping eyes.
But Faith came by, and took me by the hand;
And now the valleys rise, the mountains fall;
Welcome the stormy sea! the dangerous land!
With Faith to aid me, I can conquer all.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Appropriating Faith.

We speak only the general sentiment, in making faith the foundation of the religious life. The blessings, which are purchased and are offered us in the New Covenant, in particular, cannot be received except by faith. In the language of Mr. Erskine, which is well adapted to popular apprehension, "Christ is the bread of life, *faith* is the *mouth* of the soul, that eats and feeds upon him. Christ is the mystical brazen serpent, *faith* the *eye* of the soul that looks to him for healing. Christ is the strong hold cast open to the prisoners of hope, *faith* the *foot* of the soul, that runs into him for shelter."* If it is desirable to live acceptably to God and to walk in the light of his countenance, it is desirable to possess faith. We are told in the Scriptures, that "without *faith* it is impossible to please God." How important it is, therefore, to have right views of this excellent Christian grace, considered in its relation to sanctification and holy living, as well as in its connection with justification.

* Ebenezer Erskine on the Assurance of Faith. Discourse II.

There are three leading kinds of faith, saying nothing of some subordinate modifications, viz. historical faith, a general religious faith, and an appropriating faith; each of which is entitled to a brief notice. An historical faith in the Saviour is merely a belief that such a man as Jesus Christ, possessing many of the virtuous traits which his biographers have ascribed to him, appeared in Palestine at the commencement of the Christian era. It is not easy to see how a person who gives credence to any of the historical narrations of antiquity, can do otherwise than receive this belief. This faith, however, does not necessarily involve the existence of religion, or even of good morals. Men of abandoned characters and of essentially infidel sentiments may go as far as this. Voltaire and other distinguished enemies of the Christian system had a belief of this kind.

"Alas," says Jacob Behmen, speaking of the state of things in his times, of which he says, that true faith was never weaker since Christ's time than it is now, "the faith of this day is but HISTORICAL, a mere assent to the matter of fact, that Jesus Christ lived and died, that the Jews killed him, that he left this world, and is not king on earth in the outward man; but that men may do what they list, and need not die from sin and their evil lusts. All this the wicked child SELF rejoiceth in, that it may fatten the Devil by living deliciously."*

(2.) There is also a general religious faith. A person may not only believe with those who pos-

* The Way to Christ, Bk. II, Chap. 3, §. 52.

sess an historical faith, that there was such a man as Jesus Christ; but may also believe, that he died for the salvation of men in general. This form of faith, it is true, is important; but it does not and cannot secure all those objects which are ascribed to faith in the Bible. I suppose it may be said with truth, that the devils believe and know, not only that there was such a being as Jesus Christ, but that he died upon the cross for sinners. It does not commend itself to human reason, and still less to the word of God, to say that a man has *saving* faith, who believes in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world so far as the world receives him in that capacity, and yet *individually* and *personally* does not believe in him as his own Saviour. If such a general and unappropriating faith were sufficient, it would be no difficult matter to fill up our churches, since those who have such a faith as this may be found in great numbers.

But a faith of this kind, and which goes no further than this, is practically DEAD. And perhaps it may be said here, that the great sin of the people of our own age is, not that they have merely an *historical* faith and stop in that, as in some former corrupt periods; but that they too often rest satisfied with a general and abstract faith, which is theoretically applicable to the world at large, without bringing it home to *themselves*. They believe in the general truth, without making a specific and personal application; and thus serve Satan as effectually, as far as they are personally concerned, as if they had only an historical faith.

(3.) A third form or modification of the great principle of faith, is what may be called APPROPRIATING FAITH. The necessity of this form of faith is evident from even a slight consideration of the subject. The usual understanding is, with the exception of those who hold strictly to a limited atonement, that our Saviour has provided a common salvation, adequate to the wants of all; but available only in the case of those who exercise faith. How far this salvation will practically extend; how many individuals will avail themselves of it; why some are taken and others are left, we cannot tell; nor are we certain, that it is important for us to know. But certain it is, that no one will accept of the provision which is made, without faith. But what sort of faith? The answer is, It is that which can speak in the first person; that which has an appropriating power; that which can say *I* have sinned; *I* have need of this salvation; *I* take it home to myself. It is not enough for me to say, I believe that Christ died for others; I must also believe that he died for me individually, and accept of him as *my* Saviour. It is not meant by this, that previous to the exercise of appropriating faith, and independently of such exercise, we have a special or particular interest in Christ, separate from and above that of others; and that appropriating faith consists in believing in this special or particular interest. An appropriating faith of this kind, and operating in this manner, might be very dangerous. It is merely meant, that out of the common interest, which is broad as the human

race, we may, by means of faith, take individually that which the gospel permits us to receive and regard as our own; and that we can avail ourselves of this common interest, so as to make it personally our own, in no other way.

God deals with us, (certainly for the most part,) as *individuals*, and not in masses. When he requires men to repent of sin, to exercise gratitude, to love, and the like, the requisition is obviously made upon them as *individuals*, as separate from and as independent of others. It is not possible to conceive of any other way, in which obedience to the requisition can be rendered. Nor is it conceivable that the remedial effect of the atonement should be realized in any other way than this. How is it possible, if I, in my own person, have suffered the wound of sin, that a remedy, which is general and does not admit of any specific and personal appropriation, should answer my purpose? Furthermore, in dying for all, in other words, in furnishing a common salvation, available to all on their acceptance of the same, Christ necessarily died for me as an individual, since the common mass or race of men is made up of individuals, and since I am one of that common mass or race. And indeed we can have no idea of a community or mass of men, except as a congregation or collection of separate persons. In dying for the whole on certain conditions, he necessarily, therefore, on the same conditions, died for the individuals composing that whole.

It would seem to follow, then, from what has been said, that the faith, which we especially need, is a personal or appropriating faith; a faith which will disintegrate us from the mass, and will enable us to take Christ home in all his offices to our own business and our own bosoms. We must be enabled to say, if we would realize the astonishing cleansing and healing efficacy there is in the gospel, of God that he is MY God, of the Saviour that he is MY Saviour. We must be enabled to lay hold of the blessed promises, and exclaim, these are the gift of MY Father, these are the purchase of MY Savior, these are meant for ME.

It was thus, that patriarchs, prophets and apostles believed. This was the faith of those consecrated ones, of whom the world was not worthy, recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Hear the language of the Psalmist, as an illustration of what is to be found frequently in the Scriptures. How precise, how personal, how remote from unmeaning generalities. "I will love thee, O Lord, MY strength. The Lord is MY rock, and MY fortress, and MY deliverer; MY God, MY strength, in whom I will trust; MY buckler and the horn of MY salvation, and MY high tower." And it is worthy of notice, that the first word of the Lord's prayer has this appropriating character. "OUR Father, who art in heaven."

It is here, in connection with this form of faith, that we find the great and effective instrument of progress and of victory in the Interior Life. If

we possess an appropriating faith, and if our faith be operative and strong as it should be, we shall not only gain the victory over the various temptations which beset us in the present life, but shall find ourselves rapidly forming a new and wonderful acquaintance with God. In the present life a strong and operative appropriating faith is the key which unlocks the mysteries of the divine nature, and admits the soul to a present and intuitive acquaintance with its exceeding heights and depths of purity and love. No man, who has not this faith or has it not in a high degree, can be said to live in true union with the divine mind, *with* God and *in* God. Hence we consider it important to say distinctly, in endeavoring to sketch some of the traits and principles of the interior or hidden life, that those persons will have no true and experimental knowledge of the things which we affirm, who merely believe generically and not *specifically;* in other words, who believe for others rather than themselves; who, in the exercise of a sort of discursive faith which embraces the mass of mankind, cannot be said to possess it individually and personally, and for their own soul's good. Let us, then, begin to learn the great lesson of faith; of faith in its general nature; of faith in its various modifications; and particularly the indispensable lesson of appropriating faith. Well has Martin Luther somewhere remarked, that the marrow of the gospel is to be found in the pronouns MEUM and NOSTRUM, MY and OUR.

Faith is better to us, far better, than mere intel-

lectual illumination; better than any strength of joyous emotion; better than any thing and every thing else, except holy love, of which it is the true parent. The fallen angels, in their primitive state of holiness, had illuminations, great discoveries of God and of heavenly things, and great raptures. But when their faith failed, when they ceased to have perfect confidence in God, they fell never to rise again. Our first parents fell in the same way; because they ceased to have confidence in God; because they ceased to believe him to be what he professed to be, and that he would do what he declared he would do. Their previous glorious experiences, their illuminations and joys, availed nothing, as soon as unbelief entered. Unbelief in them, and unbelief in their descendants, has ever been the great, the destructive sin. And faith on the other hand, an implicit confidence in God, a perfect self-abandonment into his hands, ever has been, and from the nature of the case ever must be, the fountain of all other internal good, the life of all other life in the soul.

And it may be remarked here in addition to what has been said, that God, in his infinite mercy, knowing the ruinous effects of unbelief, seems determined to try and to strengthen the belief of his people during their present state of probation. His word declares, that they must walk by faith in the present life. All his various Providences point in the same direction. He, who attempts to walk in any other way, will find himself inconsistent, changeable, subject to unsuitable elevations and de-

pressions; and in many respects falling short of what a Christian ought to be. Not that faith is the only Christian principle, or the only Christian grace. By no means. But it is the fundamental principle; the prerequisite and preparatory element; especially of that Love, which purifies the heart, and is the "FULFILLING OF THE LAW." And to which, therefore, as another great and indispensable Christian trait, which, though second in the order of nature, is generally considered more eminently and peculiarly characteristic of the true inward life than any other, we proceed to give a renewed attention.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Of disinterested or pure Love in distinction from interested Love.

It will be recollected, that it was attempted to be shown in one of the preceding chapters, that evangelical holiness is to be regarded as the same thing with perfect love. The great commandment is: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." He who begins to love may be said to begin to be holy; but it is he, and he only, in whom the principle of love has subdued that of selfishness, and who loves with his whole heart, in whom holiness can be said to be complete or entire. Faith undoubtedly, whether we consider the subject scripturally or psychologically, is the foundation of love. The views, which have been presented in the two last chapters, abundantly show, that faith is a principle, antecedent to love in time, and absolutely indispensable. But it is love, nevertheless, to which God has assigned the high honor of declaring it to be "the fulfilling of the law." So that the great question, that in comparison with which every other is of small importance, whether we are wholly

the Lord's and are truly holy, may be resolved into another, viz. whether we are perfected in love?

But we proceed to remark here, in this position of our inquiries, that there are various kinds of love. There are not only differences in *degree*, which separate perfect love from all the weaker or inferior gradations; but what is of vital importance, it is generally understood that there are differences also in *nature*. For instance, we may love another merely for the benefits which he has conferred upon us; or we may love him for what he is IN AND OF HIMSELF. It is the latter only, which is to be regarded as pure love, disinterested love. It is our object to show in this chapter, that we must not only love God in the highest degree; but with that sort of love, which is in its nature pure or disinterested.

(1.)—In the first place, we are required to do this on natural principles. Nature herself,—in other words, the common feeling and common sense of mankind—teaches us what true love is, in distinction from interested or merely selfish love. If we profess to love a person, it is the common and natural understanding in the case, that we profess to love him as he is; in other words, we love him for what he is in and of himself; and not merely or chiefly for the benefits which he may have conferred upon us. The principles of the philosophy of the mind, which are drawn chiefly from an observation of the feelings and conduct of men, do not appear to recognize any other true love than this. If my neighbor, for instance, declares that

he loves me I accept his declaration and rejoice in it; but if I afterwards learn, that he loves me merely in consequence of some benefits I have conferred upon him, I can truly say to him, he is mistaken in the whole matter; and that he loves *himself* and not me. It seems to be self- evident, that all true love must terminate in the object that is beloved; and not in the person that exercises love. And accordingly true love is never egotistical. In other words it shows no disposition to revert continually to itself; and to revolve around its own centre of origin. On the contrary, true or pure love, in distinction from that which is self-interested, is diffusive, generous, and self-forgetting. It expatriates itself, as it were; flying on its beautiful wings from its own heart to find a home in the heart of another. And it is accordingly with such love, a love which lives for another and not for itself, a love devoid of any debasing and inferior mixture, that we ought to love God.

(2)—In the second place, while men are evidently able to make the distinction between these different kinds or forms of love, it is apparent also, that they respect and honor disinterested love; while they have neither admiration nor esteem, for that form of love which is based upon personal interest merely. Some ancient heathen writers, Cicero in his treatise De Amicitia, and Plato in particular, in various places of his writings, speak in the highest terms of that friendship or affection, which is disinterested. Plato advances the sentiment, that the most divine trait in man's nature, and that, without which he can-

not be happy, is, "to deny and go out of himself for love." Hence it is, that ancient writers bestow such high commendation upon the friendship of Pythias and Damon, who lived under the tyrant Dionysius, and were willing to die for each other. Each of them seemed willing to forget, and, as it were, to extinguish himself, in order that the other might live and be happy. This was true love. And men are so constituted, that such love always commands their regard and honor. They instinctively perceive, that it has in itself a divine element, which necessarily allies it to the highest and purest form of existence, whatever it may be; and that it is morally beautiful and ever must be so, in its own underived lustre. And accordingly they speak of it at their firesides; they crown it with historic encomiums; they sing its praises in poetry; while all other love, as existing between man and man, they despise and trample under their feet. And is it reasonable to suppose, that a love, which men themselves, darkened as they are in their natural perceptions, instinctively condemn and reject, will be acceptable to God?

(3)—In the third place, the character of God is so pure, so exalted, that the claims of right and justice cannot be satisfied with any homage which it may receive, short of pure, disinterested love. God contains in himself the sum of all conceivable excellence. If there is any being who is to be loved for himself, because he contains in himself every thing that is lovely, it is God. If human beings reject, with an instinctive contempt, any love

which is found to be based upon selfish considerations, how can God, who has so much higher claims, receive it? Upon this point all language fails. The tongues of angels cannot describe the divine excellence. It is because God is what He is, and will continue to be what He has been, that He is the true and only proper object of the heart's highest homage. The divine character stands forth, in the view of the universe, as the natural, the appropriate, and ever sufficient object of pure love.

But the question may be asked here with some degree of force, Is not God's benevolence towards ourselves to be taken into view, and to have some effect upon our feelings? Undoubtedly it is. We shall love God, if we fulfill the divine requisition in its entire extent, as he is, and not otherwise than he is. And this implies, that we are to take into view every part of his character and of his acts. It is true, it is impossible to love him with that kind of love which is called pure love, for the simple and exclusive reason, that he has been good to us. Pure love, which does not confine itself to any personal or interested view of things, necessarily requires a wider basis of movement than this. But we love him with entire purity of love, because, while He has been good to us, He has sustained, in every other respect, the perfection of his character and acts. In other words, there has been a diffusion of truth, purity, and righteousness over his whole character and administration; including what he has done for ourselves as well as his acts

in other respects. And it is his character and acts, as thus presented in their entireness, and not in partial glimpses, which command the homage of pure love.

(4.)—In the fourth place, the Scriptures require us to love God with disinterested or pure love. We say nothing here of the great command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart; which evidently implies the dethronement and exclusion of selfishness. There are various other passages of Scripture, which, if we rightly understand them, evidently look to this result, viz. that we should love Him for what he is in and of himself, independently of our own private interests. Accordingly it is said in Luke, chap. 14:26; "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, *and his own life also*, he cannot be my disciple." And again in the same chapter, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH, he cannot be my disciple." And again it is said in another place, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you." And perhaps still more directly and appositely to the subject under consideration, the inquiry is made in another passage, "If ye love them, which love you, what thanks have ye? for sinners also love those, that love them. And if ye do good to them, who do good to you, what thanks have ye? for sinners also do even the same." These are the declarations and precepts of the Savior himself. There are many others ve-

ry similar, to be found in different parts of the Word of God. As when, for instance, the Apostle John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" How true it is, then, that charity, or the genuine love of God and our neighbor, "SEEKETH NOT HER OWN." And how appropriate the direction, "Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the things of others."—We have only to add, that passages, such as have now been referred to, evidently strike at the existence of that form of love, if such it can be called, which proposes to build itself on personal or selfish considerations.

But what shall be done, it will perhaps be said here, with that passage of Scripture, 2d John, 4: 19, which asserts, "We love God, because He first loved us." The difficulty here, as it seems to us, is easily explicable. We admit, that, in our present condition, we never should have loved God, if his love to us had not been antecedent. He formed the plan of salvation; He sent his beloved Son to make an atonement for our sins; He commissioned the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understandings, and to enable us to contemplate his glory. In a word, he has put us into a situation, utterly unattainable by our own unaided efforts, in which we can truly estimate his character in its whole extent of glory, not only as possessed of infinite mercy, but of infinite justice. It is in view of such proceedures of the divine administration, that we can truly say," we love God, because He first

loved us." And at the same time can say with equal truth, and in a still more important and essential sense, we love Him for what He is in and of himself. His previous love to us, without which we never should have exercised any love towards Him of any kind whatever, has opened the way for the exercise on our part of that pure and holy love, which alone can be truly acceptable.

(5.)—We remark further, that the nature of the human mind is such, being limited and dependent, that it evidently requires an adequate centre of love, on which it can rest. No being, that is weak and dependent, and is conscious, as man is, of this weakness and dependence, can find a safe and satisfactory centre in itself. Accordingly the man, whose love reverts wholly or chiefly to himself, is always found to be more or less anxious and unhappy. And if our love fixes upon any being out of ourselves, but short of God and to the exclusion of God, it soon finds a weakness there, and becomes uneasy; and has a sort of instinctive consciousness, that the true centre is not yet found. Hence if our souls would find rest, they can find it only by an alienation of self and of all subordinate creatures, and by union with God. And what has now been said is not only obvious in itself, but it is believed, it will be found to be confirmed by the testimony of those, who have made the greatest advancement in holiness. In the transition they have passed through from the natural life to the true life of God in the soul, they have attached themselves, as it was perhaps natural they should do, to various

inferior objects, to outward forms, to ministers, to church organization and ceremonies, to christian friends; and have endeavored for a time to find a rest of soul in these inferior things. But it has always eluded them. They have felt the foundation shake. They have realized an inward disquietude and weakness, till, leaving every thing else, however desirable in many respects and for many purposes it might be, they have reached the strong rock of salvation in God alone.

Finally, it is the nature of true love to react upon and to expand itself. It is satisfied with nothing but constant increase. It ever desires to love more; and is ever enlarging its own capability of loving. It can, therefore, rest firmly and quietly, and with entire satisfaction, only in an object which has capacity and fullness enough to meet this tendency. As in God there is not only infinity of being but infinite loveliness, so the principle of love in men, though it should expand and increase itself through all eternity, will find in Him all its wants supplied. No other object can supply them; and it seeks no other. But in God it finds all that it needs. It has a home there, like no other home. It has no fear of failure in the beloved object; it has no desire of change. It exults triumphantly, and with ever increasing exultation, in the midst of the glories of the Infinite Mind. This is the true point of rest; the soul's eternal rock; the everlasting centre; and it can be no where else.

In connection with what has been said, we make a few remarks further, naturally flowing out

of the subject. And, in the first place, we observe, it is a bad sign, when Christians are thinking more of themselves than of God; in other words, when they are more taken up with their own joys and sorrows, than they are with God's will. When this is the case, they have not as yet learnt the great lesson of self-crucifixion; of doing and suffering the will of another. "The cup which my father giveth me shall I not drink it?" These are the words of the Savior; and they convey deep and precious meaning. When we are fully delivered from the influence of selfish considerations, and have become conformed to the desires and purposes of the Infinite Mind, we shall drink the cup, and drink it cheerfully, whatever it may be. In a word, we shall necessarily be submissive and happy in all trials, and in every change and diversity of situation. Not because we are seeking happiness as a distinct object, or thinking of happiness as a distinct object, but because the glorious will of Him whom our soul loves supremely, is accomplished in us. To the purified mind, the sorrows and joys of this life, when contemplated in the light of God's providences, are alike. Whatever God sends is welcome to it. Hence we say, it shows a state of mind short of evangelical perfection, when we think more of ourselves than we do of God, and more of our own happiness than we do of the divine glory.

We remark, in the second place, that in the doctrine of pure love, existing in the highest degree, we find the true basis of Christian harmony. There

never can be harmony among Christians without some common centre of attraction. Without such a centre their principles of movement will vary, and they will be exposed to perpetual conflicts. What a delightful prospect would be presented, if all Christians could meet in this great centre! What unity of purpose! What mingling of affection! It is party and selfish interests which divide. A common interest unites. God, being loved with perfect love, and for his own sake, makes all hearts one. It is then, that we all drink, and are all nourished, at the same fountain. We unite in him and rejoice in him, as a principle of life-giving inspiration, having a common and universal efficacy, operating as the soul of each separate soul and the life of each separate life, and thus making what was before separate and self-interested but one life and one soul in himself.

We observe again, that we find in this doctrine the true principle, not only of union among Christians in this life, but of the permanent moral harmony of the universe. The universe must have a centre. And it has. And that centre is God. But there cannot be universal harmony, notwithstanding, unless all hearts are drawn to that centre, as the supreme object of attraction and delight. This simple principle of pure love, always terminating in God as its centre, and as its supreme object, excludes every jarring sound, and establishes universal concord. And as it is exercised without distrust and without fear, attaching itself to an object whose perfections never change, it naturally brings

substantial joy; joy full as its fountain, which is God, and lasting as his existence, which is eternity.

Finally, in the opposite of pure love, that is to say, in selfishness, as it developes itself in a future life, we find the great principle of moral discord, and also that, which constitutes the essential basis of the misery of hell. The misery of hell is not an accident; but just to the extent it is experienced at all, it is a permanent and necessary truth. Like everything else it has its philosophy. Its leading element is love, terminating in self as the supreme object; in other words, it is supreme selfishness. This principle, wherever it exists and wherever it is transferred, necessarily carries with it the grand element of the world of woe. A being, who is supremely selfish, is necessarily miserable. The result does not depend upon choice or volition, but upon the nature of things. Instead of the principle of unity, which tends to oneness of purpose with other beings, and naturally leads to happiness, he has within him the principle of exclusion and of eternal separation. In its ultimate operation, if it is permitted permanently to exist, it necessarily drives him from every thing else, and wedges him closer and closer in the compressed circumference of his own personality. So that he is not only at variance with God and with all holy beings; but he is not at unity even with the devils themselves. The principle of love, terminating in self as the supreme object and exclusive of other objects, in other words, supreme selfishness, makes him at war

with all other beings; and it is impossible for him to be happy but in their destruction, which is also an impossibility. This is the true hell and everlasting fire.

"Oh Love! I languish at thy stay!
"I pine for thee with lingering smart!
"Weary and faint through long delay;
"When wilt thou come into my heart?
"From sin and sorrow set me free,
"And swallow up my soul in thee!

"Come, Oh my comfort and delight!
"My strength and health, my shield and sun,
"My boast, and confidence, and might,
"My joy, my glory, and my crown;
"My Gospel hope, my calling's prize;
"My tree of life, my paradise.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

On the Love of our Neighbor and of ourselves.

We proceed now to the consideration of a subject, naturally flowing out of that of the foregoing Chapter, viz. that of love to our neighbor, and of created and inferior beings in general. And the first proposition, which we lay down is this. If our love to God be disinterested and pure, and at the same time exist in a degree suitable to the object, viz. in the highest degree, then all other love, and the love of all other creatures will be entirely subordinate to this, and will exist only in relation to it. If we possess pure and perfect love to God, we shall perfectly sympathize with Him in his love towards whatever He has made; and shall, according to our capacity, love just as He does. Our love will naturally, and perhaps we may say of necessity, flow in the same channel. And whatever things He takes an interest in, whether material or immaterial, whether of greater or less consequence, will possess precisely the same interest for us, so far as we possess an equal knowledge of their nature and an equal capacity of love. The devout recollection of the great Architect will im-

part a degree of sacredness and value to whatever is the work of his hands. In his woods, his rivers, his mountains, his burnished sky and his boundless ocean, we shall see the indistinct reflection of himself, and join to our perception of beauty in the object a still higher admiration of the wisdom and goodness of its Maker. We shall recognize in the birds of the air, in the cattle of the verdant hills, and even in the heedless insect that hums around our path, the agency of Him, who doeth all things well. And we shall feel here, as in other things, that we can never be indifferent to any thing, which our Heavenly Father has made and takes an interest in.

As we rise in the scale of beings to those, which have a rational and moral nature, to those, who are kindred in race and are perhaps kindred by the nearer relationship of family ties, we shall experience the exercise of love on the same principle. We do not deny, that we shall be susceptible of a natural love. We know that we shall be. But what we mean to say is, that our love, whether purely natural and founded on the relations we sustain to the object, or whether an acquired love and resting wholly upon the deliberate perception of its amiable qualities, will be perfectly subordinate to the love of God and will be regulated by it. It would perhaps be a concise expression of the fact to say, whatever specific modifications our love may assume under the operation of natural causes, that we shall love all things IN AND FOR GOD. And if we are required in the first instance to love God

with ALL our heart, it does not clearly appear when we fulfill the divine requisition, how we can love our neighbor or any thing else in any other way than this.

"But what is," says a certain writer, "loving any creature only IN and FOR God? It is when we love it only, as it is God's *work, image, and delight*; when we love it merely as it is God's, and belongs to Him. This is loving it IN God. And when all that we wish, intend, or do to it, is done from a love of God, for the honor of God, and in conformity to the will of God. This is loving it FOR God. This is the ONE LOVE, that is, and must be the spirit of all creatures, that live united to God. Now this is no speculative refinement or fine spun fiction of the brain; but the simple truth, A FIRST LAW OF NATURE, and a necessary bond of union between God and the creature. The creature is not in God, is a stranger to him, has lost the life of God in itself, whenever its love does not thus begin and end in God." *

And in this way, under the great law of supreme love to God, we may not only love, as we ought to, our friends, our relatives, and our fellow men universally; but, under the same law and in the same manner, we may love ourselves, and may love and seek our own happiness. God is willing that we should. He has made us so that we cannot do otherwise. He requires us to do it. But what is our happiness? It is to love God with all our heart, and to hold all other love in subordination; or what seems to be the same thing, to love God supremely, and to exercise and measure all other love with a

* Law's Spirit of Prayer, Pt. I. Ch. II.

reference to that supreme and perfect standard of measurement. It is to feel the full power of that divine attraction, which silently draws us from the circumference to the centre; it is to experience the restoration of the broken bond of union with the Divine Mind; to be lost, as it were, in the great ocean of the infinite fullness. In other words, our happiness is to renounce ourselves entirely, in order that God, in whom alone is all goodness, may resume that throne in the heart, from which He has been banished. And accordingly we love ourselves and our own happiness, even our frail bodies as well as our immortal souls, because God made us; because He takes care of us and desires our happiness and recognizes the propriety of our exercising the same desire; because He has designed us, under the operations of his grace, to be mirrors of his own image and the temples of the Holy Ghost; and not because we have a desire, or could for a moment have a desire, a purpose, or a love adverse to, or even not coincident with his. So that all subordinate love of his creatures, whether it have relation to ourselves or others, may truly and properly resolve itself into the love of God.

(1.)—In connection with what has been said, we may properly make one or two remarks. The first is, that this doctrine makes the exercise of love to our neighbors, in the same degree in which we love ourselves, an easy thing. We love ourselves, only as we love God. In other words, if we love God with perfect love, the love of ourselves will be subordinated and restricted by the controlling desire,

THAT GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED IN US. We can seek nothing, desire nothing, love nothing for ourselves, but what is subordinate to and has a tendency to God's glory. So that the love of self, whatever it may be, is merged and purified in the encircling and absorbing love of God. The love of our neighbor is properly measured, on the principles of the Scriptures, by the love of ourselves. And as we can love ourselves only in subordination to God's will and glory; so we can love our neighbor only in the same manner and the same degree. In other words, both the love of ourselves and of our neighbor are only rills and drops from the mighty waters of love to God. And on the supposition, that we are filled with the love of God, the love of our neighbor flows out from the great fountain of divine love, in the various channels and in the degree which God chooses, as easily and as naturally, as a stream flows from its lake in the mountains over the meadows and valleys below. There is no need of effort. Only let God in his providence furnish the occasion; and in a moment the heart will open, and the streams will gush out. Hence the remarks, which are found in various places of the writings of Augustine, Thauler, and Fenelon to this effect, (and some eminent theologians of this country appear decidedly to favor this view,) that the love of God is capable of animating and regulating all those affections, which we owe to his creatures; that the true manner of loving our neighbor, is to love him in and for God; and

that we never love him so purely and so much, as when we love him in this way.

(2.)—We observe further, that the love of our neighbor, flowing from this divine source, and equalling in degree the love of ourselves, meets and adapts itself, with a wonderful flexibility, to all the ordinary occasions and demands of life. It leads us to the humble residences of the poor, and the chambers of the sick. And while it sympathizes in the sufferings, it also rejoices in the consolations of others, just as it would in its own. "Such souls," says Fenelon, "as are really detached from themselves, like the saints in heaven, regard the mercies distributed to others, with the same complacency as those they receive themselves; for, esteeming themselves as nothing, they love the good pleasure of God, the riches of his grace, and the glory He derives from the sanctification of others, as much as that which He derives from them. All is then equal, for the personal self or ME is lost. The ME is no more ME, [that is, relatively to the exercise of the affections on their appropriate occasions,] than another person. It is God alone, that is ALL IN ALL. It is God, whom they love and admire; and who, in the exercise of this disinterested or pure love, causes all the joy of their hearts."

(3.) We remark again, that, on the principles which have been laid down, we see how we may fulfill the command of our Savior to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to them that hate and persecute us. Instead of

being a very difficult thing as is commonly supposed, and as it would undoubtedly be on natural principles, it becomes easy, because, in the language of Francis De Sales, "We cannot love God as we ought, without adopting his sentiments and LOVING WHAT HE LOVES." Now we know that God loves those who do not love Him. He loved us, even when we were his enemies. He so loved a rebellious and disobedient world, as to give his Son to die for it. And if we are in the same spirit, loving only what He loves and hating what He hates, we shall find no difficulty in loving our enemies, and in praying for those who "despitefully entreat us." No matter how unlovely they may be in themselves, no matter how cruel and unjust their treatment may be to us, the consideration, that our Heavenly Father loves them and requires us to love them, lays all things even, and opens the full channels of the heart, as if there were no obstacles existing.

Finally, when we love our fellow-men in this way, we love with a perseverance and constancy, which could not be realized under other circumstances. Our love is not subject to those breaks and variations, which characterize it when it is based upon the uncertainties of the creature, instead of the immutability of the divine will. On the contrary, it continually flows on and flows on, whether it meets with any favorable return or not, partaking in no small measure, of the unchangeableness of the divine nature.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

On the Distinction between love and joy.

It would seem from the views, which have been taken, that PERFECT LOVE is to be regarded, on the principles of the Gospel, as essentially the same thing, or rather as precisely the same thing with SANCTIFICATION OF HOLINESS. Certain it is, that those, who are perfected in love, whatever may be their infirmities and errors, and however important and proper it may be for them to make constant application to the blood of the atonement both for the forgiveness of the infirmities of the present and of the infirmities and transgressions of the past, are spoken of and are treated in the New Testament, as accepted, sanctified, or holy persons. Those, therefore, who are truly and without any self interested reflections seeking perfection of love, may very properly be considered as seeking holiness. But it is proper to say here, that some degree of observation and inquiry has given occasion to the remark, that some persons, who are truly seeking the sanctifying power of assured faith and perfected love, and who suppose that they are seeking it in the right way, have nevertheless committed the

dangerous error of confounding joy with love; and are in fact, without being fully aware of it, seeking after a state of highly joyful and rapturous excitement, instead of true love. It is to some mistake of this kind that the pious Lady Maxwell probably has reference, when she says, "The Lord has taught me, that it is by faith, and not joy I must live." It seems to me, therefore, important, in order to understand the true foundation of the christian life, to draw the distinction between joy and love. This is the object of the present chapter.

(1.)—In endeavoring to point out the distinction between joy and love, which, it must be admitted, cannot be satisfactorily done without careful consideration, we proceed to remark in the first place, that the distinction is very properly made in philosophical writers between Emotions and Desires; and that joy is to be regarded as an emotion, rather than a desire. Regarded as an emotive state of the mind, joy, like the emotions generally, naturally terminates in itself. That is to say, a person may be the subject of highly raised joyful emotions, and at the same time may remain inactive. He may be wholly occupied with the extatic movement of his own feelings, and be destitute of thought, feeling, and action for others.—But the leading characteristic of love, that in particular which distinguishes it from mere joy, is the element of *desire.* It is the nature of love, as it is the nature of every thing else of which desire is the prominent element, not to stop or terminate in itself: but to lead to

something else. And, furthermore, love, like other benevolent affections, is not only active in relation to others; but is active for the *good* of others. We have here, therefore, an important ground of distinction. If Christians were filled with joyful feelings merely, they might, being destitute of other principles of action, remain slothful at their own firesides, and see the world perish in their sins. But love, on the contrary, is sweetly and powerfully impulsive; and constrains us, especially if it be strong, to do good in every possible way to our fellow men. And hence the expression of the Apostle, "the love of Christ CONSTRAINETH us."

(2.)— In the second place, joy may be founded on selfish considerations. But love, certainly that which God recognizes and requires, that disinterested or pure love of which we have already given some account, is always benevolent. It is sometimes the case, in consequence of a wrong position of our minds, that we may even rejoice in the evil or suffering of others. We may be very well pleased, very happy, when we see them perplexed, misrepresented, and injured. But it does not appear, how we can at such times be said to *love* them. Joy, therefore, may go where love will not follow. Joy may have a field of action which love has not. Accordingly we can conceive of the devils rejoicing. They may rejoice, and undoubtedly do rejoice in the misery of each other. It is their nature. Evil is their good. But we cannot conceive how they can love.

(3.)—We may remark, in the third place, that

in love there is always something elevating, ennobling, and purifying to the soul. It is the great source and fountain of generous and exalted actions. It is the secret and powerful spring of religious magnanimity, of holy heroism. But the tendency of joy is, in itself considered and independently of other principles, to create in the mind a species of spiritual sensuality. It leads the soul, (at least such is its tendency, unless accompanied by other principles,) to sit quietly and inactively in the easy chair of its own gratification. It thinks too much of itself, to have the power of thinking much of others. Its tendency, therefore, *in itself considered and independently of other principles of action*, is to turn the mind off from the highest good. It may even have the effect, (and it is believed that the experience of some Christians on this point will confirm the statement,) to remove the mind, in some degree, from God himself, and from Christ, and from the Holy Ghost, upon whom it ought always to rest. And this, certainly, is a result which is greatly to be deplored.

(4.)—It will be recollected, in the fourth place, that a leading characteristic of love, as already has been remarked, is DESIRE; a state of mind, which may very properly be distinguished from an emotion. Accordingly we can never love an object, without desiring the good of that object. In the exercise of love we carefully notice those occasions, on which we may have it in our power to promote the good or happiness of the beloved object; and are faithful to improve them. When our love is

decided and strong, we are oftentimes much more solicitous to secure the welfare and happiness of the beloved person than our own. The state of mind, as already intimated, is not quiescent, but impulsive; it impels to action; and not to selfish, but benevolent action. Observe the love of a parent to a child. Perhaps the child may be deformed in body or mind, or both. There may be nothing especially attractive either in its person, conduct, or prospects. And yet the heart of the parent constantly goes out towards the child in acts of kindness. And the same may be observed, in a multitude of cases, on the part of the child towards the parent. Some parents are brutish and cruel in their conduct; their hearts are hardened, perhaps by intemperance; their natural affections are thus blunted; but their children, notwithstanding this, love them, watch over them, and do a multitude of acts, which could result only from love. It is in accordance with these views, that we find mention in Scripture of those who received the word of God with joy; and yet soon withered away. And why? Because, with all their joy, they had not the abiding root of LOVE. They were the subjects of a temporary pleasurable excitement; but had never experienced a new direction and bent of the heart. True love, clinging to the object of the affections, is permanent; joy is often evanescent.

(5.)—We remark further, as a natural consequence of what has been said, that the love of God, as it exists in the minds of those who are his devoted followers, always inquires after his will.

It does not ask after ease, pleasure, reward; nor, on the other hand, does it ask after trial, suffering, and contempt; it merely asks after the Father's will. Its language is that of the Savior, when he says, "*Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.*" And as in common life we think much of a person that is beloved, and desire his favor and approbation; so in regard to God, if we truly love him, he will be very much in our thoughts, and his approbation and favor will be to us of great price. If he is the highest object of our love, we shall desire no higher happiness than that of constant communion with him, and of being always united to him by oneness of will. Thus we may be said to be in him, and he in us; and that eternal rest of the soul, which constitutes the true heaven, will be commenced here. Then we shall have the true joy, calm, deep, unchangeable. Love goes before; joy comes after. Love is the principle of action; joy is the reward. In the spiritual tree of life, love is the nutritive sap, the permeating and invigorating power, that flows through the body and the soul of man; joy is one of its beautiful fruits and flowers. If, therefore, love is strong, joy will never fail us. But, on the other hand, if love is wanting, there can be no joy, except that joy of the world, which worketh death.

In view of what has been said, one or two remarks may be made. And the first is, if we are truly sanctified to the Lord, in other words, if we love God with all our hearts, our course as Christians will be a consistent and stable one. Our rule

of action will be the will of God; our principle of action will be the love of God. And as the will of God is fixed, and is made known to us in various ways, especially in his holy Word, we shall endeavor to fulfill it at all times humbly and faithfully, without regard to those temporary and changing feelings which too often perplex the religious life.

It may be remarked further, in conclusion, that in the state of mind which has been spoken of, we shall not fail of any consolation which is needful for us. It belongs to the very nature of desire, that, when the desire is gratified, we are more or less happy. Accordingly in exercising love to God, the leading element of which is desire, and in doing and suffering his holy will, in accordance with such desire, we cannot be otherwise than happy in a considerable degree. If we seek joy or happiness as an *ultimate* object, we cannot fail, on religious principles, to miss of it. If, under the promptings of love, we seek merely to do and suffer the will of God, we shall certainly, except in those cases, where God, by a special act of sovereignty, withdraws consolation *in order to try our faith*, possess all that consolation, which will be needful. And in the case which has just been mentioned, if our faith, still trusting in the beloved object, sustains the terrible shock of apparent desertion, (as when our Savior exclaimed, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?") we shall soon find abundant consolation returning.

CHAPTER NINTH.

On the distinction between natural and spiritual Joy.

We have endeavoured in the preceding chapter to point out the distinction between love and joy; a distinction, not very obvious at first sight, but which really exists and is important to be made. But it is proper to add here, that the views of the chapter may be somewhat aided, and perhaps modified in their *practical application*, in connection with a distinction, which yet remains to be made, and which may very properly be made, between NATURAL joy and SPIRITUAL joy. It is true, that gracious or spiritual joy is not to be confounded with Love, any more than natural joy is. In both cases, the distinction between love and joy is a real and permanent one. But then there remains the additional view, which will help to throw further light upon the subject before us, that gracious or holy joy differs, in some of its aspects, from natural joy.

We proceed, then, to remark, in the first place, that natural joy and spiritual joy are different in their origin. Natural joy, which is sometimes denominated "the joy of the world", arises from nat-

ural causes; from physical or worldly good; from health, property, worldly influence, the indulgences of sense; from such causes, in a word, as we might suppose to exist and to produce joy within us, if we had no perception of a God and no knowledge of religion. Spiritual or gracious joy, which is spiritual or gracious in its origin, arises from the knowledge of spiritual objects, from the discharge of spiritual or religious duties, and from the inspiring agency of the Holy Ghost. And hence it is sometimes denominated the "joy of the Holy Ghost."

(2.)—Again, natural joy, arising from natural principles, and unchecked and unregulated by gracious influences, has oftentimes a very powerful effect upon the physical system. And it is possible and even probable, that this may sometimes be the case with true spiritual or gracious joy; especially when the emotion is strong and immediately successive to a painfully depressed and suffering state of mind. And it is not unreasonable to suppose, that, in some cases, when powerful physical results are found to exist, that there may be a union or combination of natural and gracious emotion. But it is nevertheless true, that the natural tendency of spiritual joy, IN ITSELF CONSIDERED, and independently of *any peculiar circumstances*, is, in a remarkable degree, and much more so than that of mere natural joy, to produce a tranquilizing effect upon the mind and through the mind upon the physical system, and to promote soundness and regularity of action in both.

(3.)—We observe, in the third place, that there

is a tendency in natural joy, especially when it is strong, to perplex the action of the perceptive and discriminating or judging powers. This is true of the natural emotions generally, when they are in an excited state. Any considerable agitation in that portion of our sensitive nature, which is termed the Emotions, is commonly understood to be unfavorable to correct perception and judgment. A man, for instance, who is agitated with emotions of displeasure, of jealousy, or of fear, will find it difficult, while remaining in such state of agitation, to go through successfully with an intricate train of mathematical or other reasoning. And the result will be the same, if he is considerably agitated with emotions of natural pleasure or joy. But true spiritual joy, when undisturbed by unfavorable influences from the physical system and unmixed with natural joy, leaves the mind tranquil, and the perceptive and discriminating faculties clear and effective in the highest degree. And these views seem to be confirmed by a consideration of the state of holy beings. All holy beings, there can be no doubt, experience true joy of heart; but in our reflections on their mental character and operations, it is certain, that we never conceive of them as having their minds clouded and their perceptive powers blunted by excessive emotion. The natural feelings, which are regulated with difficulty, continually run into excess; but this is never the case with those truly religious or gracious feelings, which are really inspired by the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, when it said of the disciples on a certain

occasion, (Luke 24 : 41,) that they "believed not for JOY," it is probable, that they experienced an excitement and confusion of mind, resulting from a mixture of natural joy with emotions of an holy kind.

(4.)—It remains to be remarked further, that natural joy is often attended with certain incidental evils, which are not likely to exist in connection with gracious or holy joy; such as an undue hilarity of spirit, a sort of unreflecting and too youthful levity and flightiness of thought and manner, unsuitable to our age or our situation in life; what George Fox, in speaking of some Christians in his day, expressively describes, as "BEING UP IN THE AIRY MIND." On the other hand, holy joy, when it is free from any mixture and perversion of natural joy, is deliberately and deeply serious. When natural joy is superadded or is superinduced upon a truly spiritual or gracious experience, and gives a character to our actions, it is possible, that there may be sometimes results bordering upon those airy and flighty manifestations, which have been mentioned; but whenever this is the case, it is certain, that these results do not flow from any state of mind, which is truly the work of the Holy Spirit. Religious or sanctified joy, always bearing the stamp of deliberation and wisdom, always in keeping with that seriousness which naturally flows out of the truths and the responsibilities of religion, is entirely suited to the objects and occasions, on which it arises; so as to leave in the mind both the appearance and the fact of perfect tranquillity;

such as there is in God himself, who may be said to be always happy, always joyful, and yet to be always serious and unalterably tranquil. This joy seems to me to be often expressed in the Scriptures by the word PEACE; and is probably the precise state of mind, the delightful legacy of all true Christians, which the Savior had in view, when he said to his disciples, "PEACE I leave with you; MY peace I give unto you." Such a joy may be strong. In the language of scripture, it may be "unspeakable and full of glory." But it is always calm and peaceful; and in this respect is entirely different from that excited and unprofitable intoxication of spirit, which is sometimes found to be experienced, and which so possesses and agitates the mind, that the will of God and our duty cannot be clearly perceived.

Finally, holy joy, being founded in the perception of the character, attributes, and will of God, is not necessarily liable to changes. He, who rejoices in God to-day, having a correct view of his character and will, will never find reason to do otherwise than rejoice in that character and will, in all coming time. And simply because God, in his character and his will, is always the same. In all afflictions and trials of whatever nature, there will still remain the basis of a serene and pure joy in the depths of the heart. But natural joy, being founded upon natural objects, which are frail, uncertain, and full of imperfection, necessarily partakes of the uncertainty and imperfect nature of its causes. And hence it is said in the portion of Scripture al-

ready referred to. "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with JOY, [that is with natural joy.] And these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation, fall away." So that holy or spiritual joy may be compared to the sun, which always shines with its pure and beautiful light, even when wrapped in clouds; but natural joy is like a meteor, gleaming for a moment and then extinguished; rekindled again after a time, but destined soon and suddenly to sink in still greater darkness.

In connection with the marks, which thus separate natural from spiritual joy, we observe, in conclusion, that spiritual joy, being a truly Christian grace, is exceedingly valuable and desirable. And truly blessed is he, who possesses that state of mind, which is properly called "joy in the Holy Ghost." It is true it is a grace, both subsequent in time and inferior in rank to LOVE, which ought to be sought first as the reigning and controlling principle of the soul. But, it is, nevertheless, in its appropriate time and place, one of the precious gifts and graces of God. And hence the various expressions and commands, having a relation to this cheering state of mind, which are found in the Bible. "REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." Ps. 33; 1. "But REJOICE, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." First Peter, 4: 13. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John, 15;

11. "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1st Thess. 5; 16, 17,18.

Illustration of the subject from personal experience.

[In the following extract from the personal experience of a pious person of the Baptist church, now no longer living, the reader will notice an exemplification of that tendency to seek for joyous emotion, which is so common and oftentimes so injurious.]

"I trust I was enabled deliberately, not only in view of sickness and death, but of life and health, to make an unreserved consecration of my *all* to Christ, and to feel that in whatever situation I might be, holiness to the Lord must henceforth be my motto. I could now yield myself a willing subject to the sanctifying grace of God, believing he would work in me according to the good pleasure of his will. Soon a heavenly calm possessed my mind, a sense of the divine glory surrounded me, and my whole soul seemed in sweet harmony with the holiness of God. There were no rapturous emotions, but I felt

> "The sacred awe that dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love."

How easy now seemed the divine requirement, to love Him with *all* the heart, and my neighbor as myself. I felt a peculiar tenderness of conscience, and feared nothing but to offend my Savior. Being still feeble in body, I could not endure strong mental exercises, and as the change in my feelings was not sudden, nor characterized by strong emotions, I was

soon tempted to doubt whether it was really what I had been seeking for. I prayed earnestly for A FULLNESS OF JOY, and an undoubted evidence, but the more I sought for this, the less my evidence appeared, until I was willing to leave all with God, to give either a *crumb* or a *full meal.* My peace then returned, and blessed be God, it has continued like a river, to flow broader and deeper to the present time.

Never before did I feel so much my entire dependence on all-sufficient grace, and such a confidence that it would be given in every time of need. Like a little child I have looked into the Bible for instruction, and O what an inexpressible glory has beamed therefrom! A new blessedness has appeared while receiving Christ as a Savior from *all* sin,—a present Savior, a full Savior. How glorious the consideration to one, who has all her life in some degree been subject to bondage! Truly I can now say the Holy Spirit has led me into the truth, and the *truth* has made me *free.* I no longer feel like a wanderer, but like a *child* at *home.* My weary soul now rests in Christ, and finds "his yoke easy, and his burden light." With entire confidence can I now commit all my interests, temporal and spiritual, into his hands, and feel that they are safe. My greatest desire is to know and do the will of my Heavenly Father, and to possess all the mind of Christ. I feel deeply interested in the progress of holiness. With all my heart can I bid God-speed to those, who are engaged in promoting this blessed cause."*

* Guide to Christian Perfection, Vol. III, p. 39.

CHAPTER TENTH.

Some marks or characteristics of perfection of Love.

If the doctrine, which is variously termed sanctification, evangelical holiness, and evangelical or christian perfection, be true, then it will follow, that it is our duty and privilege, even in the present life, to realize in our own souls the fulfillment of that great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." In other words, it is our duty and privilege to possess what may properly be called perfect love. Accordingly it becomes a very important and interesting inquiry, When can our love properly be said to be perfect? It will be our object in the remarks which follow in this chapter, to endeavor to answer this inquiry.

But before proceeding, it may be proper to premise here, that perfection of love implies the removal or extinction of all selfishness. In other words, perfect love is always PURE love. We may probably conceive of love, which is pure in its *nature*; but is deficient, and therefore not perfect in its degree or intensity. But we cannot conceive of love which is acceptable to God, and is perfect in degree, which has any intermixture of selfishness.

Another remark, which may properly be made here, is this. Perfection of love is necessarily relative to the capacity of the subject of it. In other words, what would be perfection of love in one would not be in another, whose capacity of loving is greater. That precise amount or degree of love in man, which would be characterized as perfect in consequence of being all his capacity could render, would be imperfect in an angel or other being of greater capacity.

With these remarks in recollection, we proceed to inquire, when our love to God may be regarded as PERFECT. In other words, when shall we know, or at least have reasonable grounds to believe, that we fulfil in our own hearts that great and excellent command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength?—Love to a human object is generally understood to embrace two things; FIRST, a pleasure or complacency in the object, and SECOND, a desire to do good to that object. When speaking of God, who sustains to us a relation higher and different from that sustained by human beings, we may with propriety alter the form of expression slightly, although with essentially the same idea at the bottom, and say that love to God embraces two things; FIRST, a pleasure or complacency in his character, and SECOND, a desire to promote his glory. The characteristics of entireness or perfection of love, which we shall proceed to mention, are based upon this distinction.

FIRST.—Accordingly the first mark of perfect love

to God is an entire approbation of and delight in his character in all respects. In other words, approving and complacent emotions, without the least intermixture of doubt and dissatisfaction, arise in view of his power and justice, as well as of his goodness and mercy, so that we delight truly and continually in his whole character, and in all the exhibitions of his character, as they are actually made known to us in the Holy Scriptures or in any other way. The least want of trust and complacency in the divine character will necessarily be a vicious ingredient or element in the affection of love, which cannot fail to diffuse weakness and imperfection throughout.—This is one point, then, on which it is important to examine ourselves. If we find, that the character of God, as it presents itself to notice in all its varieties, appears to us exceedingly pure and lovely; if we contemplate it with a perfect conviction, that all its manifestations will be in accordance with truth, mercy, and righteousness, and with no other emotions in any respect, than those of entire complacency, then we have reason to think, that we have one of the marks or characteristics of perfection of love. Not, in all probability, the leading and decisive, but still an indispensable one.

Second.—A second mark of perfect love to God is the existence of a desire to promote his glory, which is the other higher and more decisive characteristic of this complex mental state, in such a *degree*, that we are not conscious of having any desire or will at variance with the will of God.

In other words, it is our sincere and constant desire to do and to suffer in all things the will of God. When such is the case, when there is an entire and cordial acquiescence of our own in the will of God both to do and to suffer, we have the second mark, and we may add also, the most important and satisfactory one, that our love is perfect. The nature of the human mind is such, that we never can have an entire and cordial acquiescence in the will of God in all things, without an antecedent approval of and complacency in his character and administration.—Accordingly the second mark, viz., a will entirely accordant with and lost in the will of God, is of itself sufficient, inasmuch as it necessarily includes and embraces the first. And by this mark alone, as I suppose, we might know, whether our love is or is not perfect.

We may, perhaps, illustrate this view of the subject, by what we sometimes notice in the various forms and degrees of filial love. We will take, in the first place, the case of a child, who is sincerely attached to his father, but who, as we sometimes express it, exhibits a "will of his own." This child, undoubtedly, loves his father very much; but at the same time he does not always do, with entire pleasure and readiness, what his father wishes him to do. He sometimes hesitates, exhibits a clouded brow, or utters an impatient expression, when certain things are required of him. He has certain little objects of his own which he is very much attached to; and if his father's plans happen to cross and oppose them, he exhibits, in a greater

or less degree, a disposition to set up for himself and to rebel. And when he outwardly obeys, it is found that he does it reluctantly, and not with a will harmonizing and blending with the paternal will. Now we say very truly, that this child loves his father—perhaps he loves him very much—and yet it is clear he does not love him perfectly. But when we see a child who is happy only when he sees his father happy; whose delight it is to anticipate the father's wishes; whose will, by a sort of instinctive tendency, is invariably and powerfully united and blended with the paternal will, so that the least opposition between the two wills is a source of the greatest grief to him, we at once feel, and cannot help feeling, that the love of such a child may properly be called perfect. And in accordance with this view, it is said to have been one of the sayings of the devout Francis Xavier, that "the perfection of the creature consists in willing nothing but the will of the Creator."

What other idea of perfection of love can we have than this? His heart is made one with another heart, and what could we ask for more? This, then, is the true mark of perfection in Christian love, viz. an entire coincidence of our own wills with the will of God; a full and hearty substitution of the divine mind in the place of our own minds; the rejection of the natural principle of life, which is love terminating in self, and the adoption of the heavenly principle of life, which is love terminating and fulfilled in God; in other words, the expulsion of self from the heart and the enthronement of God there

as its everlasting sovereign. This view, which is practically, as well as theologically, a very important one, seems to be confirmed by what the Savior says of himself in a number of passages. John vi. 38, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John iv. 34, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Heb. x. 9, " Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." The same idea, viz, that perfection of Christian love exists, and exists only in connection with a will united to and perfectly coincident with the will of God, is conveyed in that interesting passage, Mark iii. 34, 35, "And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever *shall do the will of God*, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Matt. vii. 21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, *but he, that doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven."

A number of inferences easily follow from these general views, and which may be regarded as furnishing some additional or secondary marks of perfected love.

(1.)—A person, who has perfect love, will love his Bible above all other books. It will be dear to his heart, an inexpressible treasure. And the reason is obvious. It is because in the Bible he learns the will of God, which he delights in, more than in any thing else. And hence it is one of the artifices of Satan, who is no friend of the Bible, to endeavor

to detach devout minds from the study of the Divine Word under the plausible pretence, that the inward teachings of the Spirit are of more value, than the outward letter. An artifice, which he, who desires a close walk with God, will carefully guard against; remembering that God cannot consistently, and will not, neglect and dishonor his own divine communications; that the Holy Spirit operates in a peculiar manner, in connection with the written Word; and that he, who deserts the Word of God, may reasonably expect to be deserted by the Spirit.

(2.)—Perfect love will exhibit a trait of permanency and perseverance under the most trying circumstances. Our fears and hopes vary; our joys and sorrows vary; but we may reasonably expect that perfect love will continue the same. There is no reason why it should change, since the object at which it aims is the same with the immutable will of God. The will of God is its true life. Accordingly, when in the providence of God we are afflicted, our joys will be less, but there will be no diminution of love. Joy flourishes in the sunshine, but love grows and flourishes in the storm also. God may hide his face from us, but hearts of love still look in that direction where his face is. The Savior, on a certain occasion, was greatly afflicted. His language was, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His joy was taken from him, but his love remained. He could still say, while he prayed that the cup might, if possible,

pass from him, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

(3.)—We remark, in conclusion, that those, in whom the love of God is perfected, will love the children of God with peculiar strength. Perfect love is the image of Christ in the soul; and wherever we see that image, in whatever denomination of Christians, and in whatever persons, our hearts will recognize the divine relationship, and rejoice in it. Without this strong love to those who bear the divine image, we may be sure that our love is not perfect. It is God's great work, and highest delight, to create this image in the hearts of men; and if our will is swallowed up in his will, we shall rejoice in it in some degree as he does, and shall know the delightful meaning of those numerous passages of Scripture which speak of the love of Christians to each other.

"Tis Love unites what sin divides;
The centre, where all bliss resides;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first Great Cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace, passing human thought."

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

On the Act or Covenant of Religious Consecration.

The two great and inspiring elements of the religious life are faith and love. And in the case of those who are experiencing all that it is our privilege to experience in the present state of being, they are perfect faith and perfect love. Hence it became necessary, at an early stage of our inquiries, to enter into some explanations of these two great principles. Principles so important, that they ought to be fully understood both in their nature and relations. Principles so nearly affiliated, that if one exists, the other exists, and whether they are contemplated in their combined or separate action, are so effective and ascendant over the mental operations, that their existence in the highest degree necessarily involves the renovation of the whole moral nature.

We are now prepared to return to a topic, which was briefly noticed in the third chapter, and to consider it a little more at large. We refer to the important subject of personal Consecration. And we call it important, because it seems to us that it is closely connected with, and is, indeed, a sort of

antecedent condition to whatever is most valuable in the experience of faith and love. We do not propose, however, in the present chapter, to enter into an examination of the necessity of the dedicating or consecrating Act, and of the benefits connected with it, which we cannot doubt are generally conceded; but to limit our remarks to the MANNER, in which the act or covenant of consecration ought to be made.

(1.)—And the first remark, which we have to make on this subject, is, that the consecration of ourselves to God should be made DELIBERATELY.—A consecration, made in this manner, viz. with calmness and deliberation, is due to our own characters, as rational and reflecting beings. As God has made us perceptive and rational, he desires and expects us, especially in important transactions, to act in accordance with the principles he has given us. It is not reasonable to suppose, that God would be pleased with a consecration, made thoughtlessly and by blind impulse, rather than by deliberate reflection. Man has deliberately rebelled and gone astray, and it is due to himself and his Maker, it is due to truth and to holiness, that he should deliberately and reflectingly submit and return; that his repentance of sin should be accompanied with a clear perception of his sinfulness; that his determination to do God's will should be attended with some suitable apprehensions of what He requires; and that his fixed purpose of future obedience should be sustained by the united strength of all appropriate considerations.

(2.)—We observe, in the second place, that the consecration must be made for ALL COMING TIME. It is true, that there may be specific consecrations of a modified character, restricted to particular objects and occasions, and limited also to definite periods. A person, for instance, may devote himself exclusively, for a limited time, to the one important object of erecting a place of public worship. And regarding him as giving to this one object all his powers of body and of mind, we may properly speak of him, in an imperfect or modified sense of the term, as CONSECRATED to this particular work. But it is quite obvious, that such instances of consecration are exceedingly different from the one under consideration; which is fundamental and universal in its character, and which would be inconsistent with itself, if it were applied to one object to the exclusion of others; which takes into view the very being and nature of the soul; which considers the principles of man's departure from God and also the principles involved in his restoration; which recognises the full amount of God's immutable and infinite claims; and which, therefore, on the grounds of truth and rectitude, as well as of safety and of happiness, cannot be made for a less period than all time and eternity.

(3.) It may be remarked again, that the consecration, including our bodies as well as our spirits, and our possessions as well as our persons, all we are and all we have, all we can do and all we can suffer, should be made without any reserve. There are many professors of religion, who are willing

to give up something to the Lord; and perhaps it can be said, that there are many who are willing to give up MUCH; but the consecration, of which we are speaking, requires us to be truly willing to give up ALL. And not only to be WILLING to give up all, but to do it. It is true, that in our present state, some things are needful for us, and our heavenly Father assures us that he is not ignorant of it. But while, in compassion to our obvious wants, he bestows upon us those things, which are necessary to beings who must be fed, clothed, and sheltered, he requires us to hold these and all other gifts of a temporal nature, which we sometimes call our own, as bestowments imparted by himself for a special purpose, and to be retained and used in perfect subordination to the divine will.—And still more important and necessary is it, that all the exercises of the mind, that all powers and efforts of the intellect and all desires and purposes of the heart and will, should be laid sacredly upon the divine altar; in perfect simplicity of view; without any reservation, and without any regards, however secret and intimate, to the claims of self; inscribed, as it were, within and without, with holiness to the Lord; FROM God, OF God, and FOR God.—Consecration without reserve implies, that we are not only to give up our persons and powers to be employed as God wills, but also to endure or suffer as God wills; and it implies also that we are to give them up to be employed and to suffer, just in the time and place, and in all the precise circumstances, which are agreeable to God; without presuming to dictate to him in

the smallest respects, and without any will or choice of our own.

(4.)—Finally, in the full conviction that no efforts or purposes of our own will be available without divine assistance, we should make the consecration in reliance upon divine strength; recognizing, on the one hand, our own entire weakness; and at the same time fully believing, on the other, in the willingness and readiness of God to aid and deliver us in every time of temptation and trial. A consecration, made without a distinct recognition of our own insufficiency, and without the expression and the reality of reliance on God alone as our only hope, would be wanting in the most essential element. It would necessarily fail of the divine blessing; and could not result in any good. "Lay it down to yourself, as a most certain principle," says Dr. Doddridge, "that no attempt in religion is to be made in your own strength. If you forget this, and God purposes finally to save you, he will humble you with repeated disappointments, till he teach you better."

A consecration, thus deliberately made, including all our acts, powers, and possessions of body, mind, and estate, made without any reserve either in objects, time, or place; embracing trial and suffering as well as action, never to be modified, and never to be withdrawn, and which contemplates its fulfilment in divine and not in human strength, necessarily brings one into a new relationship with God, of the most intimate, interesting, and effective nature. It is not easy to see, how a soul, that is

thus consecrated, can ever be deserted. Divinity is pledged in its behalf. And in all times of temptation and trial, when clouds and storms hang darkly and heavily around, there will always be a redeeming power, a light in the midst of shadows, the shining of the bow of promise.

A word further remains to be said here. I am aware, there are some, who seem to appreciate the necessity of entirely consecrating themselves to God, and perhaps may be said to be willing to do it, but who have felt a difficulty in one particular. They have inquired with a good deal of solicitude, how is it possible to make a consecration now, which shall bind us to fulfil the will of God in all the emergencies of the unseen and untried future; including cases, the difficulties of which we are now unable to appreciate; and therefore do not know, that we have now, or ever shall have strength to meet them. In respect to such cases, all we can say is, that we must commit ourselves into the hands of God in the exercise of *simple faith*; remembering his declaration, that "his grace is sufficient." God hath said, Heb. 13: 5, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

In the conclusion of this subject, I would introduce another short passage from Dr. Doddridge.* —"I would further advise and urge," he says, "speaking on the matter of making an entire consecration of ourselves, "that this DEDICATION should

* Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, Chap. xvii.

be made with all possible solemnity. Do it *in express words.* And perhaps it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious Divines have recommended, to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it, that on such a day of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration, and serious reflection, you came to this happy resolution, that whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord." In connection with some further remarks of this kind, he gives two forms of consecration, of which the following is an abridgement.

Form of consecration, abridged from Dr. Doddridge.

Eternal and ever blessed God! I desire to present myself before Thee with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, sensible how unworthy such a sinful worm is, to appear before the Holy Majesty of heaven, and to enter into a Covenant transaction with Thee. I come acknowledging myself to have been a great offender; smiting on my breast, and saying with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. I come invited in the name of thy Son, and wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness; intreating that, for his sake, Thou wilt be merciful to my unrighteousness, and wilt no more remember my sins.

Permit me, O Lord, to bring back unto Thee those powers and faculties, which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service: And receive, I beseech Thee, thy poor revolted crea-

ture, who is now convinced of thy right to him, and desires nothing in the world so much as to be Thine. It is with the utmost solemnity, that I make this surrender of myself unto Thee. I avouch the Lord this day to be my God; and I avouch and declare myself this day to be one of his Covenant children and people. Hear, O Thou God of heaven, and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that I am thine, ENTIRELY THINE. I would not merely consecrate to Thee *some* of my powers, or *some* of my possessions, or give Thee a certain portion of my services, or all I am capable of for a *limited* time; but I would be *wholy thine* and *thine forever.*

From this day do I solemnly renounce all the former Lords, which have had dominion over me, every sin and every lust; and bid in thy name an eternal defiance to the powers of Hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions, which their fatal temptations have introduced into it. The whole frame of my nature, all the faculties of my mind and all the members of my body would I present before Thee this day, as a living sacrifice, HOLY and ACCEPTABLE to to God, which I know to be my most reasonable service. [To Thee I consecrate not only my person and powers,] but all my worldly possessions; and earnestly pray Thee also to give me strength and courage to exert for thy glory all the influence I may have over others in the relations of life, in which I stand.

Nor do I only consecrate all that I am and have to thy service; but I also most humbly resign and

submit to thine holy and sovereign will, myself, and all that I can call mine. I leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction all I possess and all I wish; and set every enjoyment and every interest before Thee, to be disposed of as Thou pleasest; contentedly resolving, in all that Thou appointest for me, my will into Thine, and looking on myself as NOTHING, and on Thee, O God, as the great, Eternal All, whose word ought to determine every thing; and whose government ought to be the joy of the whole rational creation.

Receive, O heavenly Father, thy returning prodigal! Wash me in the blood of thy dear Son! Clothe me with thy perfect righteousnes; And sanctify me throughout by the power of thy Spirit. And O Lord, when thou seest the agonies of dissolving nature upon me, remember this Covenant, even though I should then be incapable of recollecting it, and look with pitying eye upon thy dying child. Put strength and confidence into my departing spirit; and receive it to the embraces of thine everlasting love.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

Of Assurance of Faith.

It is worthy of notice, both as a religious and an historical fact, that in a number of Christian sects a distinct and well defined modification of personal religious experience has for many ages been known and recognized under the denomination of ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

The phraseology, which is employed to indicate this form of experience, seems to have had its origin in the following passage in Hebrews. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10: 19—22.

In the early periods of this country, when the piety of our ancestors was chastened and invigorated by heavy afflictions, the instances of ASSURANCE OF FAITH, as compared with those of later times,

were frequent. It is a matter of thankfulness, that they are not unknown even now.

The basis of this form of religious experience, as the name given to it itself indicates, is FAITH. And in this respect, it stands undoubtedly on the same footing with every other form of true religious experience. Nor do I know that the faith, which is experienced in these marked and triumphant instances of the religious life, is different from what is experienced in other cases, except in the single circumstance of DEGREE. It is a very high degree of faith. The term ASSURANCE, which, in its ordinary acceptation, excludes the idea of doubting, is an evidence that it is so. The phrase, ASSURANCE OF FAITH, conveys, in its own terms and on its own face, the idea of faith without doubting, in other words, of perfect faith. Looking at the subject in the light of the terms used, I think we are at liberty to say, that assurance of faith is synonymous with undoubting or perfect faith. The instances themselves of this form of experience, whether they are such as are made known to us historically in the lives of those who are said to have lived and died in assurance, or such as have come within the range and notice of more recent observations, sustain this view. Those, who are in the enjoyment of this state of mind, are a people, that have an unwavering confidence in God. In the language of John Rogers, the memorable martyr of Smithfield, given in a short published account of his early religious experience, "they live by faith in the Son of God, above the letter in the LIFE;

above the form in the POWER; above self in a higher self; so that they are no longer themselves; but are by the grace of God what they are; not doubting, that they shall appear perfect in Christ's righteousness, being pardoned by his death, purged by his blood, sanctified by his spirit, and saved by his power."

We have an instructive and precious illustration of the state of mind, denominated ASSURANCE of FAITH, in the instances of early saints mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews; in Abel, who "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" in Enoch, who "had this testimony that he pleased God;" in Abraham, "who went out, not knowing whither he went," and who, "when he was tried, offered up Isaac;" in Moses, "who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;" in Gideon, Barak, David, Samuel, and the prophets, of whom as well as of others the testimony is given, that through faith they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, of whom the world was not worthy;" and in regard to whom it is expressly said, that God himself was "NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD."

As the subject of an assured acceptance with God is, in our apprehension, one of preeminent importance, and as it has in these latter days received less attention than it did formerly and far less than it deserves, we have thought it might be proper to introduce here an instructive passage from the writings of President Edwards. After referring to

some persons, who supposed, that no such thing is to be expected in the church of God as a full and absolute assurance, except in some very extraordinary circumstances, such as that of martyrdom, and asserting that this view is contrary to the doctrine of Protestants as maintained by their most celebrated writers, he proceeds as follows. "It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in Scripture, to be assured. God, in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favour to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness to it; and says plainly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another," Job 19. 25, &c. David, throughout the book of Psalms, almost everywhere speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as his God: glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 Kings 20. 3. Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John, (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church,) often declares his special and everlasting love to them, in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises

them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time, that he does so, to the end, that their joy might be full, John 15. 11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, chap. 16. 33. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last discourse of his with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was, that they should be with him in his glory: and tells his Father, that he spake these things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, ver. 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the contrived ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full assurance of their future glory.

The Apostle Paul, through all his epistles, speaks in an assured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and

Redeemer; and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four. Gal. 2. 20. "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Phil. 1. 21. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." 2 Tim. 1. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day."

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly shew it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that everything might be made sure on God's part. "The covenant is ordered in all things and sure:" the promises are full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Heb. 6. 17, 18. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew

unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose as the saints' strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases was not attainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified, Heb. 9. 9, if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, but that all Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. 1. 5—8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming of Christians, and an argument of something very blameable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no, 2 Cor. 13. 5. "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" And it is implied that it is an argument of a very blameable negligence in Christians, if they practice Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, in that 1 Cor. 9. 26. "I

therefore so run, as not uncertainly." And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians' knowing their interests in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostles tell us by what means Christians (and not only apostles and martyrs) were wont to know this; 1 Cor. 2. 12. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And 1 John 2. 3. "And hereby we do *know* that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And ver. 5. "Hereby *know* we that we are in him." Chap. 3. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Ver. 19. "Hereby we *know* that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." Ver. 24. "Hereby we *know* that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." So Chap. 4. 13, and Chap. 5. 2, and ver. 19."*

Such are the strong and well sustained statements of one, in whom Congregationalists have been accustomed to place a high degree of confidence. But this form of Christian experience, and under this specific name, has not been limited to one denomination. Instances of assurance of faith appear to have been frequent among the United Brethren or Moravians, especially in the early periods of their religious history. Mr. Wesley, the founder of the Methodist societies, relates, in the Journal of his Life, that he visited, in the year 1738, the United Brethren or Moravians at Hernhuth, the place

* Edwards on the Affections, Part II.

where they were first collected and organized into a society. At that time, as well as in later periods of his life, Mr. Wesley was a careful and philosophic observer of men; and was particularly interested to notice and to analyze the varieties of Christian experience and character. And accordingly he took pains to converse privately and very intimately with a number of the Moravian brethren, who appeared to be leading men both for their intellectual capacity and their piety; and in his Journal has recorded what he learnt from them. We will here give an abstract of some of these statements; particularly of those parts, which may be considered as illustrating historically the doctrine and the nature of ASSURANCE OF FAITH, retaining precisely the sentiment, and as far as possible, the expression.

CHRISTIAN DAVID.—Having given us to understand, that in early life he was a Roman Catholic, this person proceeds to say, "I was much troubled at hearing some people affirm, that the Pope was Antichrist. I read the Lutheran books written against the Papists, and the Popish books, written against the Lutherans. I easily saw that the Papists were in the wrong; but not that the Lutherans were in the right. I was in the city of Berlin, when I renounced the errors of Popery. After this I led a very strict life; read much and prayed much. I did all I could to conquer sin; yet it profited not. I was still conquered by it. At length, not knowing what to do, I enlisted as a soldier. I had a Testament and a hymn book;

but in one day both my books were stolen. This almost broke my heart. After six months I left the army, and went to Görlitz in Saxony. There I fell into a dangerous illness. For twenty weeks I could not stir hand or foot. Pastor Sleder came to me every day. And from him it was, that the Gospel of Christ came first with power to my soul.

"It was then I found the peace I had long sought in vain. Not indeed all at once; but by degrees. For I could not immediately believe I was forgiven, because of the mistake I was then in concerning forgiveness. I thought I was to feel sin in me no more, from the time it was forgiven. Therefore, although I had the mastery over sin, yet I often feared it was not forgiven, because it still stirred in me; and at some times thrust sore at me that I might fall. I did not then see, that the being justified by faith is widely different from having A FULL ASSURANCE of faith. I remembered not, that our Lord told his Apostles before his death, "Ye are clean" [or forgiven;] whereas it was not till many days after it, that they were *fully assured*, by the Holy Ghost then received, of their reconciliation to God through his blood.

"After some years I plainly perceived, that full assurance of faith was a distinct gift from justifying faith; and often not given till long after it; and that justification does not imply, that sin should not *stir* in us, but only that it should not *conquer*. And now first it was that I had FULL ASSURANCE of my own reconciliation, to God, through Christ.

For many years I had had the forgiveness of my sins, and a measure of the peace of God; but I had not till now that witness of his Spirit, which *shuts out all doubt and fear*. In all my trials I had always a confidence in Christ, who had done so great things for me. But it was a confidence, mixed with fear. I was afraid I had not done enough. There was always something dark in my soul. BUT NOW THE CLEAR LIGHT SHINED."

MICHAEL LINNER.—The account of the religious experience of this individual, as given by Mr. Wesley, is so concise that it will not be necessary to abridge it. It is as follows.—"The Church of Moravia was once a glorious Church. But it is now covered with thick darkness. It is about sixteen years ago that I began to seek for light. I had a New Testament which I constantly read; upon which I often said to myself 'This says, I ought to be humble, and meek, and pure in heart. How comes it that I am not so?' I went to the best men I knew, and asked, 'Is not this the word of God? And if so, ought I not to be such as this requires, both in heart and life?' They answered, 'The first Christians were such; but it was impossible for *us* to be so perfect.' This answer gave me no satisfaction. I knew God could not mock his creatures, by requiring of them what he saw it was impossible for them to perform. I asked others but still had the same answer, which troubled me more and more.

"About fourteen years ago, I was more than ever convinced that I was wholly different from what

God required me to be. I consulted his word again and again; but it spoke nothing but condemnation; till at last I could not read, nor indeed do any thing else, having no hope and no spirit left in me. I had been in this state for several days, when, being musing by myself, these words came strongly into my mind, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' I thought, '*All?* Then I am one. Then he is given for *me*. But I am a sinner. And he came to save sinners.' Immediately my burden dropped off, and my heart was at rest.

"But the *full assurance of faith* I had not yet; nor for the two years I continued in Moravia. When I was driven out thence by the Jesuits, I retired hither, and was soon after received into the Church. And here, after some time, it pleased our Lord to manifest himself more clearly to my soul, and give me that full sense of acceptance in him, which excludes *all doubt and fear*.

"Indeed the leading of the spirit is different in different souls. His more usual method, I believe, is, to give, in one and the same moment, the forgiveness of sins, and a full assurance of that forgiveness. Yet in many he works as he did in me: giving first the remission of sins, and, after some weeks or months or years, the full assurance of it."

Zacharias Neusser.—"I was born on the borders of Moravia; and was first awakened by my cousin Wensel, who soon after carried me to hear Mr. Steinmetz, a Lutheran minister, about thirty

English miles off. I was utterly astonished. The next week I went again: after which, going to him in private, I opened my heart, and told him all my doubts; those especially concerning Popery. He offered to receive me into communion with him, which I gladly accepted of; and in a short time after, I received the Lord's Supper from his hands. While I was receiving, I felt Christ had died for *me*. I knew I was reconciled to God. And all the day I was overwhelmed with joy; having those words continually on my mind, 'This day is salvation come to my house: I also am a son of Abraham.' This joy I had continually for a year and a half, and my heart was full of love to Christ.

"After this I had thoughts of leaving Moravia. I was convinced it would be better for my soul. Yet I would not do it, because I got more money here than I could elsewhere. When I reflected on this, I said to myself, 'this is mere covetousness. But if I am covetous, I am not a child of God.' Hence I fell into deep perplexity, nor could I find any way to escape out of it. In this slavery and misery I was for five years; at the end of which I fell sick. In my sickness my heart was set at liberty, and peace returned to my soul. I now prayed earnestly to God to restore my health, that I might leave Moravia. He did restore it, and I immediately removed to Hernhuth. After I had been here a quarter of a year, the Count * preached one day, upon the nature of sanctification. I found I had not experienced what he described, and was greatly terrified. I went to my cousin Wensel,

* Count Zinzendorf.

who advised me to read over the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. I did so. I had read them a hundred times before, yet now they appeared quite new, and gave me such a sight of God's justifying the ungodly, as I never had before. On Sunday I went to church at Bertholdsdorf; and while we were singing those words, *Wir glauben auch in Jesum Christ*,—'We believe also in Jesus Christ,'—I clearly saw him as my Saviour. I wanted immediately to be alone, and to pour out my heart before him. My soul was filled with thankfulness; and with a still, soft, quiet joy, such as it is impossible to express. I had full assurance that 'my Beloved' was 'mine' and 'I' was 'his;' which has never ceased to this day. I see by a clear light what is pleasing to him, and I do it continually in love. I receive daily from him peace and joy; and I have nothing to do but to praise him."

Arvid gradin, a Swede born in Dalecarlia. His statement is as follows. "Before I was ten years old, I had a serious sense of religion, and great fervour in prayer. This was increased by my reading much in the New Testament; but the more I read, the more earnestly I cried out, 'Either these things are not true, or we are not Christians.' About sixteen my sense of religion began to decline, by my too great fondness for learning, especially the oriental tongues, wherein I was instructed by a private preceptor, who likewise did all that in him lay to instruct me in true divinity.

"At seventeen I went to the University of Upsal,

and a year or two after was licensed to preach. But at twenty-two, meeting with Arndt's 'True Christianity,' I found I myself was not a Christian. Immediately I left off preaching, and betook myself wholly to philosophy. This stifled all my convictions for some years; but when I was about twenty-seven, they revived, and continued the year after, when I was desired to be domestic tutor to the children of the secretary of state. I now felt I was 'carnal, sold under sin,' and continually struggled to burst the bonds, till (being about thirty-one years old) I was unawares entangled in much worldly business. This cooled me in my pursuit of holiness; yet for a year and a half my heart was never at peace. Being then in a bookseller's shop, I saw the account of the Church at Hernhuth. I did not think there could be any such place, and asked the bookseller if that was a real account. His answer, 'that it was no more than the plain truth,' threw me into deep thought and fervent prayer, that God would bring me to that place. I went to the secretary and told him I did not design to stay at Upsal, having a desire to travel. He said, he had a desire his son should travel; and was glad of an opportunity to send him with me. I was grieved, but knew not how to refuse any thing to my patron and benefactor. Accordingly we left Upsal together, and, after a year spent in several parts of Germany, went through Holland into France, and so to Paris, where we spent another year. But I was more and more uneasy, till I could be disengaged from my charge, that I

might retire to Hernhuth. In our return from France, my pupil's elder brother returning from Italy met us at Leipsig. I immediately wrote to his father, and having obtained his consent, delivered him into his hands.

"April 23, 1738, I came hither. Here I was in another world. I desired nothing but to be cleansed inwardly and outwardly from sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ. I found all here laying the same foundation. Therefore, though I did not think with them in all points of doctrine, I waived these, and singly pursued reconciliation with God through Christ.

"On the 22d of May last, I could think of nothing but, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life.' But I was afraid of deceiving myself, and continually prayed I might not build without a foundation. Yet I had a sweet, settled, peace, and for five days this Scripture was always in my thoughts. On the 28th those words of our Lord were strongly impressed upon me, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him?' At the same time I was incessantly carried out to ask, that he would give me the witness of his Spirit. On the 29th I had what I asked of him, namely, the PLEROPHORIA OR FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, which is repose in the blood of Christ; a firm confidence in God and persuasion of his favor; serene peace and steadfast tranquillity of mind, with a deliverance from every fleshly desire, and from every outward and in-

ward sin. In a word, my heart, which before was tossed like a troubled sea, was still and quiet, and in a sweet calm."

We would add here that the United Brethren or Moravians, in the early periods of their existence as a separate denomination, were inclined to the view, that there is no true and saving faith without assurance of faith; and that justification and sanctification are either the same thing or are so nearly allied that there is no true evidence of the former without an entire experience of the latter. According to the testimony of Christian David, of whose personal experience some account has been given, they were accustomed to inquire of those, who proposed themselves for full membership in the Church, whether they were assured, beyond all doubt, that they were the children of God? In what manner and at what time they received that assurance? Whether they were so renewed in the image of God, that all sin, or "the whole body of sin," as he expresses it, was destroyed in them? And if the person could not satisfactorily answer questions of this kind and to this effect, he asserts, "we judged, that he had no true faith. Nor would we permit any to receive the Lord's supper among us, till he could." On further inquiry into the subject and additional experience of the manner of God's dealing with his people, they abandoned this view as in some important respects incorrect, and adopted the doctrine of faith as existing in different degrees; and recognized the faith of forgiveness, in connection with which a person may be

pardoned in the first instance, as well as that of assurance, which is generally later in one's experience, and results in purity of heart and inward victory. Assurance of faith, however, continued to be a leading and most important doctrine; and every one was expected to strive earnestly for its attainment. And probably among no denomination of Christians, in proportion to their whole number, have more frequent instances of this ennobling and triumphant experience been found, than among the United Brethren.

But it is proper to say, that the doctrine and the personal experience of assurance of faith have not been limited to the Christian denominations, which so far have been particularly referred to. A careful inquiry would abundantly show, that this important doctrine, which recognizes a state of mind existing in sweet purity and peace, in reverential and affectionate communion with God, in freedom from doubts and fears, in constant prayer, in victory over every known and voluntary transgression, in the baptism and in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, has been admitted, defended, and preached by Episcopalians and Presbyterians, and probably by a number of other sects of Christians, as well as by Congregationalists and Moravians. And many among the dead, who yet speak in their recorded memorials, and some we trust among the living can bear a convincing and experimental testimony to its truth and preciousness. It would be a pleasing task, if our limits would allow, to repeat here, in the case of individuals both dead and living, the

delightful facts, which warrant and confirm this declaration. Saying nothing, however, of many other instances, which are vividly present to our recollection, it seems to us, that the pious archbishop Leighton was a man, that, in the later periods of his life at least, enjoyed assurance of faith; and, on the principle which he himself has laid down, viz. that love will be in proportion to faith, that he possessed what may very properly be called an assured or perfected state of love. His American biographer speaks of him in the following terms, which, decided and emphatic as they are, will probably command the assent of candid and serious persons, who have thoroughly studied the Archbishop's religious character.

After remarking that his piety was eminently a meditative piety, he proceeds to say, "Whether in the midst of this world's scenes, or in perfect retirement, Leighton's thoughts were always fixed upon the world whither he was tending. Religious meditation seemed the involuntary habit of his soul; and in this was exemplified the profound truth of his own remark, that "the pure love of God maketh the spirit pure and simple, and so free, that without any pain and labor it can at all times turn and recollect itself in God." If duty drew him from seclusion, it was to watch and pray lest he should enter into temptation; and amidst the most absorbing earthly business, if his thoughtful face were of a clear transparency, and you could have looked through the casement of his soul far into the depths of its retirement, you would there have

seen the high purposes of God still ripening and fulfilling, and the process of growing holiness advancing as certainly and uninterruptedly as it would in the most sacred oratory of private devotion. He thought that in this world the Christian's white robe would be very likely to be entangled and defiled, if he wore it too flowingly:—

> He would not soil those pure ambrosial weeds
> With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mould.

"Our only safest way," said he, "is to gird up our affections wholly. When we come to the place of our rest, we may wear our long white robes at full length without disturbance; for no unclean thing is there; yea the streets of that New Jerusalem are paved with gold."

He was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, and he felt that he was such. He had no more motive to partake in the toils and anxieties of this life, than an angel would feel, commissioned on some errand of mercy to the dwelling-place of mortals, who stays only till he may perform the mandate of his sovereign, and is glad to return from the atmosphere of earth to the light of his Father's countenance, to his home of glory in the skies. Though present in the body, he was absent in the spirit with his Lord and Master. Amidst his fellow-mortals in all the concerns of this life he walked and acted like a man in a dream—a dream, from which he was then only to awake, when he passed into the blissful presence of his ascended Saviour. *I shall be satisfied,* WHEN I AWAKE, *with thy likeness.* And though into all the business which duty re-

quired of him, he entered with a grave intensity to fulfil the Apostle's injunction, yet all this while his soul was conversing in heaven, for he looked with the eye of faith on the things unseen and eternal. In the emphatic words of Paul, he was dead, and his life was hid with Christ in God. He was altogether Christ's; His image was always before him; His words always invited him to glory.

I hear a voice, you cannot hear,
Forbidding me to stay;
I see a hand, you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.

He thought nothing, desired nothing, did nothing, with which the idea of his Redeemer was not connected. His conversation was like that of Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration; or like what we might suppose one of the spirits of the just made perfect would exhibit, if he returned to dwell again for a short period among the inhabitants of earth. With what sweetness, what delicacy, he was accustomed perpetually to recur to the themes nearest and dearest to his heart, progression in holiness, the rest of the saints, the hour of his departure, the things which eye hath not seen, awaiting him in Eternity. Jesus, dwelling in his heart by faith, and formed within him, the hope of glory. "When," said he, "will the day break, and the shadows flee away?" "It is not," he would say, "the want of religious houses, but of spiritual hearts, that glues the wing of our affections, and hinders the more frequent practice of this leading precept of the divine law,—fervently

to lift up our souls unto God, and to have our conversation in heaven." There cannot be a doubt that his rules and instructions for a holy life are a transcript from his own experience. It would be impossible for any but a very holy man to rise even to the imagination of a life so celestial, or to compose in such a flowing strain of angelical devotion to God. These rules are a mild still voice from the innermost holy of holies in a heart where God reigns supremely and alone. Sometimes in memorials of this nature there is a repulsive coldness and austerity; here, as in the character of which these instructions are a portrait, the sanctity delineated is attractive, gentle, serene. It is a pure streamlet which has found its way into a world of sin, from the river of the water of life clear as chrystal. It breathes a divine fragrancy and carries the soul silently up to rest in its contemplations at the throne of God and the Lamb." *

In conclusion, I would make an additional remark, which seems appropriate to a full view of the subject. It is probably true, that persons enjoying assurance of faith, in those denominations of Christians where that phraseology is expressive of the highest form of Christian experience, have generally exhibited a degree of hesitancy and reluctance, in recognizing themselves as "sanctified persons," as "holy persons," as "perfected in love," as "saints," and the like. Nor have others, who have been members of the same denominations,

* See Cheever's Ed. of the Select Works of Archbishop Leighton.

been in the practice, except occasionally, of employing such epithets and expressions in relation to them. Conscious of their physical and intellectual imperfections, knowing their liability to errors of judgment and their consequent liability to mistaken and relatively wrong feelings, beset every where and sometimes deeply afflicted by heavy temptations, and feeling that they needed every moment the application of Christ's blood, it is not altogether surprising, especially in connection with some accessory influences, that there should have been some hesitation, both in themselves and in others, in making a personal application of the epithets and expressions in question. But that such expressions, however commendable a due degree of modesty and reserve always is, are proper; and that they ought in justice, on their appropriate occasions, to be applied to such persons, I cannot doubt. Persons, who are in the assurance of faith, are not merely "professors of religion," as the modern expression is; but are Christians; and that too in the highest sense of the term. They have laid themselves upon the altar of God; they have separated themselves from every known iniquity; they can say without hesitation that they have no desire but for God's glory; they are continually guided by the Holy Spirit; they have been enabled to appropriate the great and precious promises; in their moral nature and in their affections they bear distinctly the image of Christ; in a word, they have devoted their whole being to God, and nothing is so dreadful to them, as a violation of his will,

even in the smallest thing. With such dispositions and purposes of heart, I cannot see, why they may not be described, in the form of expression which is sometimes employed, as "perfected in love;" and why they may not as properly be called "sanctified," "holy ones," or "saints," as many others, to whom these expressions have been applied both in later and in earlier times. But the propriety of these remarks will perhaps more fully appear by a reference to the doctrine contained in one of the following chapters, where the precise relation between assurance of faith and perfection of love is particularly pointed out.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

Relation of consecration to assurance of Faith.

It can hardly be necessary to say any thing, in addition to what has already been said, in illustration of the great importance of that state of mind, which is denominated ASSURANCE OF FAITH. He, who truly desires the blessed experience of holiness of heart, will necessarily attach a high value to the possession of Assurance; because holiness, in the Gospel or evangelical sense of the term, is obviously identical with perfection of love. And perfection of love, as we shall have occasion to notice more particularly in a subsequent chapter, is the natural result of perfection or assurance of faith.

In respect to the nature of assurance of faith, we may remark here, after an examination of various statements and illustrations on the subject, that it appears to consist essentially in two things; FIRST, in a general but unwavering confidence in God's character, administration, and promises; and, SECONDLY, in a confident belief of our personal acceptance with God through Christ. And accordingly it is not limited to the second particular, as some persons may be inclined to suppose; but the second

element, viz. that of a particular or personal acceptance, which probably, in the popular view of it, is the striking or characteristic trait, has its basis in a prevailing or assured faith of a more general character.

With these remarks we proceed to enter on the principal topic of the present Chapter, viz. *the relation existing between consecration and assurance.*—We have already had occasion, particularly in the third chapter, to refer to the relation, existing between consecration and faith in general. Faith, (especially that faith, which is appropriating and purifying,) and the commission of known sin cannot go together. They are mutually antagonistical and destructive of each other. Just so far as consecration, which implies a fixed determination with divine assistance to resist sin in all its forms, actually exists and no further, is the way open for the principle of faith, especially in its appropriating character, to enter and to take effect in the soul. The Savior himself has explicitly taught us, (John 5 : 44,) that those, who, in the spirit of self-seeking, pursue worldly honor, and not the honor which cometh from God *only*, are unable, in the religious sense of the expression, to BELIEVE.

(1.)—But proceeding from the more general view of the subject to the particular and specific one now under consideration, we remark in the first place, that ASSURANCE of faith, like all other forms of religious faith considered in distinction from natural faith, is the gift of God. No one has it without the divine blessing. But here, as in

every other case of God's dealings, we see no other course but to take the position as almost a self-evident one, that there are reasons in the divine mind for every occurrence or fact and also for every modification of the divine conduct; and that God, in imparting the immense blessing of assurance of faith, does not, and cannot act *accidentally.* In other words, there is some antecedent fact, some preparatory condition, in connection with which this great blessing takes place. Not a meritorious condition, it is true; nothing which lays God under obligation; but still a preparatory antecedent or condition actually existing in the view of the Divine Mind, and as an indispensable part of the divine arrangement. And that condition, as the matter presents itself to our view, is CONSECRATION. Not a consecration in part, but in whole. If, with any inferior degree of consecration there may be an inferior degree of faith, there cannot be a perfection or assurance of faith, without a consecration corresponding to it. It must, therefore, be a consecration, such as was described in the chapter on that subject, both of body and of spirit, both of persons and of possessions, ENTIRE, PERMANENT, and IRREVOCABLE.

(2.)—We proceed to mention, secondly, some considerations in support of this view, viz. that entire consecration is, and must be, the antecedent condition of entire or full assurance.—Assurance of faith, as the phrase is commonly employed by writers, and as we have already had occasion to notice, is used not only to express an entire and per-

fect confidence on the part of those who possess it, in the character and administration of God; but also in their own personal acceptance with God through Christ. They have no doubt, on the one hand, of the truth, mercy, and justice of God; nor have they any doubts, on the other, that they are the beloved children of God; and that, in entire consistency with his truth and justice, are fully accepted of Him. Such is the nature of their assurance. But we hazard nothing in saying, that it is impossible for a man to believe with assurance of faith, that he is fully accepted of God, which is one of the leading elements, though not the only one, in the state of mind denominated assurance, while he is knowingly sinning against Him; which, of course, he must be regarded as doing, so long as he remains unwilling to consecrate himself. It is impossible, among other things, because it is contrary to the natural operations of the human mind in all analogous cases. It is just as impossible, (repeating here an illustration of the subject which has been already employed,) as it is for us to believe that a man, whom, we are injuring and ill-treating every day, and whom we also know to be acquainted with our evil conduct, can regard us as a friend. There is something, in such a case, in the nature of a moral contradiction. The two things cannot go together.

And, furthermore, it is impossible, because such a belief, viz. that God does fully and cordially accept of us, while we are withholding the entire consecration of our bodies and our spirits, and are

therefore knowingly sinning against him, evidently implies a conviction on the part of the person who is the subject of the belief, that God is not necessarily displeased and offended with sin. A view of things alike contrary to reason, the character of God, and the Scriptures; and therefore not reasonably to be expected in any one.—We are constrained, therefore, to draw the conclusion, (a conclusion which we think might be sustained by other considerations,) that assured confidence in the character and administration of God, combined with the additional element of assured faith in our present acceptance with Him, cannot exist, except in connection with entire consecration. In other words, we must be conscious of doing all that we can do in the fulfilment of God's holy will; of separating ourselves from every voluntary transgression; of discharging with divine aid every known duty; of laying all our powers, possessions, and gifts deliberately upon the divine altar, and without any intention of ever resuming them. The man, who is truly set apart to God in consecration, strives and prays continually, that he may not, in the smallest thing, offend his heavenly Father. He would infinitely prefer death to known transgression, even the slightest transgression.

In this state of mind, it is easy to see, that there is a natural basis for the exercise of faith, particularly the faith of personal acceptance, in the highest degree. In such a state of things, when the obstacles, which previously existed, are removed, the soul naturally turns to God; naturally relies

upon him. It becomes easy to believe, when before it was found very difficult. The Holy Spirit enters and operates without obstruction in a mind, which is in this position. The promises are readily received. Such a soul feels, that it would be sin to doubt; and thus, with the divine blessing, it rises superior to every degree of hesitation, and enters into the rest of assurance.

(3.)—Perhaps it should be added further, in order to meet an inquiry naturally arising in the minds of some, that faith in the highest degree or assurance of faith, although we have reason to think it never fails to follow the act of Consecration sooner or later in the case of minds not unfavorably affected by some physical or mental disorder, does not always *immediately* follow such consecrating act. There are various incidental causes, which sometimes operate to check and diminish the exercise of assurance of faith for a time, notwithstanding the dedicating or consecrating act; such as a general ignorance on the subject of faith, and particularly previous habits of unbelief, the unfavorable influence of which does not always cease at once. And it is not irrational to suppose, that there may also be reasons existing in the mind of God, but unknown to us, why he should see fit to delay temporarily the bestowment of this great gift, especially in that particular, which relates to our personal acceptance and safety. Accordingly it is said in Hebrews 10: 36, 37, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of

God, ye might receive the promise; for yet a little while, and he, that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." But God does not delay, even for the "yet a little while," arbitrarily and without reason, although we may be ignorant what that reason is. I believe it is a common and correct opinion, that the delay exists only so long as God sees best for the person himself. In other words, he delays, in order to wean him more effectually from all reliance upon any thing but simple, childlike trust in the divine word; and thus to prepare him for the reception of the blessing under the most favorable circumstances. There is perhaps some hidden tendency, which is scarcely known to the individual himself, such as a disposition to look for some specific sign or manifestation, or something of that nature, which remains to be smitten and crucified; and which, there is no doubt, will be crucified and taken out of the way, as soon as the person himself learns, in connection with God's continued dealings with him, where and what it is. But I do not suppose that God will thus withhold himself, even for a moment, from one who is fully prepared for him in all respects; and who, in connection with the fact of entire consecration, is truly willing, irrespective of joys and sorrows, of human aid and opposition, of the light of vision, and of the terrors of darkness, to live in that simple and mysterious way of FAITH ALONE.

"Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN

THING; and I WILL receive you and WILL be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Glory to God alone.

"Oh Loved! but not enough, though dearer far,
"Than self, and its most loved enjoyments are;
"None duly loves Thee, but who, nobly free
"From sensual objects, finds his ALL in Thee.

"Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
"Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
"Our faith and reason are both shocked to find
"Man in the post of honor, Thee behind.

"My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
"Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteemed or great.
"To take the impression of a Will Divine,
"Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

"Confess Him righteous in his just decrees,
"Love what He loves, and let his pleasures please;
"DIE DAILY; from the touch of sin recede;
"Then thou hast crowned Him, and he reigns indeed.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

Relation of Assurance of Faith and Perfect Love.

In the preceding Chapter we have endeavored to explain the relation of Consecration to Assurance of faith. But assurance also, as well as consecration, has its relationships. In particular, assurance or perfection of faith and perfection of love are closely and inseparably connected. And it becomes an interesting and in many respects an important inquiry, What is the precise relation, which they sustain to each other?

(1.)—Accordingly we proceed to remark, in the first place, that they hold the relation of ANTECEDENCE and SEQUENCE. Assurance of faith naturally and necessarily precedes assurance or perfection of love. We are aware, that some theologians, and theologians too, not wanting in powers of thought, have exhibited a disposition to reverse this order, and to place love first in time; thus making love the foundation of faith, and perfection of love the foundation of assurance or perfection of faith. But it must be acknowledged it is difficult to see, how such a position of things as this can commend itself either to the light of reason, or to

the plain language and statements of the Scriptures. How is it possible, looking at the subject in the light of nature merely, if we have no confidence in God, no faith in his character, that we should love Him? What are the principles of natural love? Undoubtedly this important affection of the human heart has its principles or laws both of origin and progress. And it becomes, therefore, a proper and interesting inquiry, in what way it arises, and in what way it supports itself in common life? And in answer to this inquiry an obvious remark is, that, with the exception of its purely instinctive action, it always has its foundation in confidence or faith in the object beloved. If we have no confidence in another's character, no faith in his truth, his honor, or his gratitude, but instead of believing in him as possessed of good and interesting traits, are obliged to regard him as characterized by what is mean, false, and evil, it seems to be impossible on natural principles, that we should love him. It is true, we may, in certain respects, be interested in such a person; we may exercise towards him the love of pity or benevolence; but we cannot exercise that form of love, which alone is appropriate to God, viz. the love of COMPLACENCY. Faith, therefore, must precede love. And this, which is the law of natural love, is also the law of religious love. And I think it is obvious from what has been said that we may go further and say, that faith not only sustains to love the relation of antecedence, but sustains also the relation of a CAUSE; not of an absolutely efficient

cause, which would exclude voluntariness of action; but of what is variously called a conditional, occasional, or preparatory cause. So that we may not only say, that in point of fact and in the order of nature, faith goes before love; but may properly add, that without the antecedence of faith love cannot exist.

(2.)—As connected with what has been said, we observe further, that it is a law of the affection of love, not only that it will follow faith, but that it will be *in proportion to faith.* It will be recollected, that we are speaking now of the love of *complacency*, of which God and all holy beings, are the appropriate objects; and not of the mere love of pity or benevolence, of which other beings and those of a very different character, may be the objects. We repeat, therefore, that love not only depends on faith, in some measure as an effect depends on a cause; but, corresponding also, in amount or degree, it will be in proportion to faith. If faith is weak, the corresponding exercise of love will be proportionally weak; if faith is strong, the degree of love will be proportionally strong; if there is an assurance or perfection of faith, there will be an assurance, that is, an assured state or perfection of love. This is the connection, if we have a right view of it, and the permanent law of the two states of mind.

And this relationship and this permanent law of the states of mind under consideration is abundantly recognized in theological writers, as well as in the Scriptures. Archbishop Leighton, after re-

marking in his Commentary on Peter, that there is an inseparable intermixture of love with belief, and that they are mutually strengthened, the one by the other, proceeds to observe as follows. "Many directions, as to the means of begetting and increasing this love of Christ, may be here offered; and they, who delight in number, may multiply them; but surely this one will comprehend the greatest and best part, if not all of them. BELIEVE AND YOU SHALL LOVE; BELIEVE MUCH AND YOU SHALL LOVE MUCH. Labor for strong and deep persuasions of the glorious things, which are spoken of in Christ, and this will COMMAND love."

(3.)—We remark again, that these two states of mind, the relation of which to each other has thus been briefly indicated, are identical in their results, *in relation to sin.* It is entirely evident, that perfect love, when actually in exercise, is inconsistent with the commission of any known transgression. It is the same, as must be evident not only from the statements of those who have been in this state of mind, but also from a slight reflection on the subject itself, with assurance of faith. It is impossible, that any man, who knowingly does any thing that is wrong, can, at the moment of doing it, have full and assured faith in God, as his friend and father, and as at that very time fully forgiving and accepting him. Assurance of faith, considered as expressive of a definite religious state of mind, has reference both to God and to the subject of it; to God, among other things, as true to his word both of threatening and of promise; and to the

subject of it, as being fully forgiven and accepted in God through Christ. It is not possible, that the man, who sins voluntarily and knowingly against God, can, *at the time of thus sinning*, have full and assured faith in either of these respects. Full faith in God, as true to his promises and threatenings would, either through the impression of strong love and gratitude, or of terrible fear, extinguish all desire and purpose of knowingly doing wrong. And full faith in God, as fully forgiving and receiving us to his favor, is obviously and utterly inconsistent with the fact of knowingly sinning against him at the same time. He, therefore, who is in the enjoyment of assurance of faith, although he may be the subject of various involuntary infirmities and errors which result from our fallen condition, and which require confession and atonement, will never knowingly do any thing against the will of his heavenly Father. And these views, it is hardly necessary to add, are entirely in accordance with those passages of Scripture, which not only speak of faith as peculiarly acceptable to God, but as working by love, and as PURIFYING THE HEART.

Dr. Increase Mather, who held an eminent rank for learning and piety among the early Congregational ministers of New England, has the following expressions in a Sermon on Assurance, which agree with what has now been said. "They, that pretend to assurance of the love of Christ, and yet have no care to observe some of his holy commandments, do but deceive their own souls, and

the Lord will reject their confidences. Where there is an eminent Assurance, if built on Scripture promises, there is eminent HOLINESS."

Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, a pious minister of the Scotch Presbyterian Church of the last century, has the following statement in his Discourses on Assurance of Faith, which obviously involve the idea of the incompatibleness of faith and the commission of known sin. "It is impossible for a person, living in the love and practice of sin, to draw near to God with the confidence of faith; for, in the very act of drawing near, *the heart is purified by faith* in the blood of Jesus; or, as it is expressed in the latter clause of the text, [referring to Heb. 10: 22,] he hath *his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and his body washed with pure water.* In believing we cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Faith, apprehending the mercy of God in Christ, turns the soul from sin unto God; so that it is as impossible for a person to draw near to God with the confidence of faith, while he lives in the love and practice of sin, as it is for a person to come to you, and go from you at the same instant of time. While the heart is in league with sin, it is departing from the Lord. How then in this case, [that is to say, when the heart is in league with sin,] can the sinner draw near to God? Far less can he draw near with ASSURANCE of acceptance."

Mr Andrew Gray, also many years since a minister of the Scotch Church, in a Sermon on this subject, gives a number of evidences or marks of Assurance, the first of which has a connection with

the train of thought now before us, and is as follows. —"A real Assurance is a PURIFYING and SANCTIFYING assurance. This is clear, first John 3: 3. "Every man that hath this hope in him," that is, is persuaded, that he will come to heaven, [which is one of the characteristics, though not the only one, of assurance of faith,] "purifies himself, even as he is pure." And second Corinthians 7: 1, Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." O, when a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry out, What have I any more to do with *idols*? When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every temptation that he meeteth, with this; 'I am not my own', 'I am bought with a price'; 'I cannot now dispose of my own self.'—And if your Assurance of going to heaven be not a PURIFYING assurance, be persuaded of it, it is but the Devil's pillow sewed over your arm-holes. Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness? Can such a delusion as this overtake you?"

In view of what has been said, as our limits do not admit of a more minute investigation of the subject, we come to the conclusion, that the doctrine of assurance of faith and the doctrine of perfect love, although in reality distinct, may yet safely and properly be regarded as but different views of one great phasis of experimental Christianity, viz. that, in which the soul is without present condemnation, and is in the experience of free, accepted, and full communion with God. Or perhaps we may ex-

press the same thing, and rather more definitely, by saying, although they are distinct, they are so closely connected, that the one, wherever it exists, necessarily involves the other; and that either of them involves the idea of evangelical holiness. If there is assurance of faith, it is necessarily followed by perfection of love, and the existence of perfect love, a state of mind which is otherwise expressed by the terms and phrases, sanctification, christian perfection, and evangelical holiness, necessarily implies the antecedent existence of assurance of faith.

But it will be asked, perhaps, by some, whose early habits of thought and association will naturally prompt the inquiry, if there be this close relation between assurance of faith and perfect love, so that they may be regarded as, in effect, identical and interchangeable, why not retain and employ the former mode of expression to the exclusion of any other? Undoubtedly particular denominations of Christians, and individuals also, influenced by peculiarities in theological views, by early associations, or some other cause, will, on some occasions, give a preference to those forms of expression, which most readily harmonize with such peculiarities and associations. Nor do we suppose, that this is to be regarded as ground of complaint. Nevertheless, there is no necessity of our being limited to one mode of expression; and in the present case, where the inward experience, although always essentially the same, presents itself in different aspects, sometimes as perfect faith

and sometimes as perfect love, there is evidently some advantage in not being so. Those, who know by personal experience what this state of mind is, will appreciate this remark, among other things, because a familiarity with different forms of expression, aids very much on many occasions in opening the way to a free and united communion with those, who are in the same state of mind in other christian denominations. They feel the need of this communion; they cannot do otherwise than seek it and find it; and on both sides it is a great satisfaction to understand the blessed import of the expressions, which they reciprocally use. And besides, as language is the natural sign or expression of things, it seems obvious, that there is something due on the part of language itself to that natural and eternal relationship, which exists in the case under consideration. Faith and love are twin sisters, born together, and forever inseparable. And the hearts where they have entered and taken possession, by whatever names of sect they may be characterized, are as closely allied and as dear to each other, as the divine and heavenly graces which animate them. He, who has assurance of faith, can never disclaim the relationship which he bears to him, who has perfection of love. And language, whose office it is to suit the word to the thing with entire impartiality, should never be wanting in acknowledged terms both to express the things themselves, and also to recognize and sanction the relationship and union between them.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

Considerations on the Life of Faith.

"The just shall live by faith." "The life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." These passages, and others like them, involve the important truth, that the Christian life is a life of faith, in distinction from a life of open vision.

There are various modifications of faith; all of which are important in their appropriate places; and all of which, it is quite probable, have a connection more or less intimate with the life of faith. But the form of faith, which is especially necessary, in order to live the life of faith, is that, *which makes God present, moment by moment, in any and all events, which take place.*—The want of this form of faith is one great source of evil. It is owing to a defect here, in a great part at least, that many persons, who believe, to some extent, in God, and in Christ, and perhaps in their own final acceptance, nevertheless make but little progress in sanctification. Adhesive in a general faith, which looks at things in masses, and rejecting that which is particular, they necessarily place God at a great dis-

tance; while, on the other hand, that faith, which is specific and particular, brings him near; makes him present and intimate in all our concerns, and establishes between him and our own souls a perpetual and happy relationship.—We hope we shall not be misunderstood. We admit that other modifications of faith are important in their place. We know them to be so. But we cannot doubt, that the true life of God in the soul must be sustained, in a very considerable degree, by means of that specific form of faith, which recognizes God AS PRESENT, NOT ONLY IN EVERY MOMENT OF TIME, BUT AS PRESENT, EITHER PERMISSIVELY OR CAUSATIVELY, IN EVERY EVENT THAT TAKES PLACE.

(1.)—Proceeding now to illustrate this general view in some particulars, we remark, in the first place, that those, who are in the exercise of that form of faith, which makes God present in every thing, will perceive and recognize the hand of God in everything, which relates to *themselves*, viz. in the preservation of their lives and health, in their affairs of business, in their sufferings and joys, in the strength or weakness of their intellectual powers, in their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, in their opportunities of discharging duty, in their inward and outward temptations, in every thing whether it relates to mind, body, or estate, or whether it relates to suffering or to action, which in any way concerns themselves, or which in any way concerns those with whom they are closely connected by family ties.

(2.)—We remark in the second place, that if we

are in the exercise of that kind of faith, which makes God present in all things, we shall be enabled to see distinctly his presence and his operative hand in the movements and acts of those, who entertain hostile dispositions towards us, and who may properly be denominated our enemies. Notwithstanding the suffering, to which the cruel and unjust course of our enemies often exposes us, we shall find no difficulty, if we are in the exercise of this form of specific faith, in recognizing and believing the presence of God in that, as in other things. The mind is in that delightful position, which enables it to think much more of God, than of the instrument, which he employs. Looking up to the great Author, it accepts from his hand with acquiescence and thankfulness the cup of bitterness; while it has mingled emotions of disapproval and pity, (compassion being the predominant feeling,) for the subordinate agent. But it is the distinct and unwavering perception, that God is present, and that it is God who offers it to our lips, which most of all changes and sweetens the draught. It is inexpressibly delightful, in all the trials that come upon us from within and without, to realize, without any misgivings of spirit, that the rod, whatever may be the subordinate agency, is in the hands of our heavenly Father.

"Lord! I am Thine; but thou wilt prove
"My faith, my patience, and my love;
"When men of spite against me join,
"THEY ARE THE SWORD; THE HAND IS THINE."

(3.)—Proceeding to a further application of these

views, we remark again; it is obvious from the Scriptures, that we are required to be "diligent in business;" "whatever our hand findeth to do, to do it with our might;" "to provide for our own households;" and undoubtedly every person must, on Christian principles, regularly and conscientiously accomplish the appropriate work of his hands, whatever it may be.

But here also, as in everything else, we must recognize the presence and agency of God. We must do whatever God requires us to do; and must recognize him alike in the fulfilment and the disappointment of our efforts. We must not think too much of the inferior instrumentality of the rain and the sunshine; of the turning of the furrow and of the planting of the seed, although these are important in their place; but placing these and all other secondary acts and causes comparatively under our feet, must endeavor to gain a higher position, and to stand in nearer proximity to the Primitive Agency. "He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap." God works in connection with second causes; but not in dependence on them. They are his servants, and not his masters; a sort of dumb expositors of his purposes and will, but in no sense, though blind man seldom looks above them, the originating and effective cause. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."* Blessed is the man, who, as he goes

* Ecclesiastes, 11: 4, 6.

about his daily business, tending his flocks with Abraham, or ploughing his fields with Elisha, can see God in trees and flowers and running brooks, in hills and valleys and mountains, in clouds and in sunshine; and can connect him, as an intelligible and effective agency, with everything that has relation to the time and the place, the nature and the results of his labors.

(4.)—It is important also, in the experience of a holy life, to extend the principle of the recognition of God's presence and agency, to all public and national events, as well as to those of a more private nature. In republican governments, and in all governments of a constitutional character, there are almost constantly before the public questions of great interest, which, when viewed out of their relation to the Divine Mind, are calculated to excite in the Christian, as well as in others, a degree of anxiety. When he beholds conflicting parties and nations, when he witnesses the wild political commotion and uproar, which has characterized almost every age of the world, the heart of the good man would faint within him, if he did not know and feel, that the hand of the Lord is in it. And yet the faith even of Christians, when exercised in relation to public events, is exceedingly weak; so much so as hardly, in the comparative sense, to have an existence. It is very different in this matter from what it should be. Nothing but a strange and blind unbelief could thus exile God from a participation in national movements. There has no political event ever taken place; there has been no

fall or rise of empires; no building up or overthrow of parties; no aggressions of war or pacifications of peace, without the presence of the hand of the Lord, either for good or for evil, for punishment or reward. Such is the doctrine of the Scriptures, as well as of reason. Their language is, "The kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations." Ps. 22: 28. "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice." Prov. 8; 15. God says of Cyrus, the Persian king and conquerer, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid." Isa. 44: 28. And He adds in the next chapter a remarkable passage, which shows, that kings and rulers, who have no realizing sense of the divine superintendence and presence, may yet be the instruments in his hands for the accomplishment of his purposes. "For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel, mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; *I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*."

Oh, that we might learn the great lesson, (the lesson absolutely indispensable to him, who would experience the highest results of the inward life,) of beholding God, either in his direct efficiency or his permissive and controlling guardianship, as present in all things, whether high or low, of whatever name or nature. Without taking this view of his presence, we deprive ourselves of that great Centre, where the soul finds rest. We are tossed and agitated by passing events. Every thing is perplexed, mysterious, and hopeless.

In conclusion we would remark, that a life of faith is necessarily a life of PRAYER. It must be obvious, that the faith, which makes God present at all times, and in all events, and yet without inspiring a sentiment of communion and sympathy with the Divine Mind, would be of no avail. When, therefore, we speak of believingly recognizing the presence of God in all things, we do not mean a recognition, in which there shall be no feeling, no sentiments of filial dependence, no gratitude and love. Far from it. God is made present by faith, in order to be loved and communed with. The spirit of true communion with God, which is only another name for the spirit of prayer, naturally flows out, as it seems to us, of the spirit of constant and specific faith; and naturally and necessarily forms an important part of the life of faith. True prayer always has relation to the existing state or tendency of the soul. Or rather it is, for the time being, the very state of the soul itself, and nothing else. And the existing state of the soul, it is hardly necessary to say, always and necessarily has a connection, more or less intimate, with the existing developement of things. Connecting, therefore, the existing state of the soul with the existing state of things around it, and the developement of things with the presence and agency of God, we are at once brought into correspondence and communion with God, in relation to the things, in which we are now most especially interested, and concerning which God is most pleased to hear from us and to know what our thoughts are. Accordingly

it is, in our apprehension, a true doctrine, that every returning day brings with it its special burden of prayer; in other words, something which it is especially proper for us to introduce to the notice of our heavenly Father for his direction and blessing. And this is true, not only of every day, but of every hour and every moment. And thus it is, that those who live the life of faith, may not only be said to recognize God in everything, and to be in communication with him in every thing; but to look for guidance and the divine blessing in every thing, and "TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING."

The following extract from a letter on Experience is copied from a tract published in Boston in 1810, and entitled, "The Life of Faith; A Letter found in the Study of the late Rev. Mr. Belcher of New England, [probably Rev. Samuel Belcher of Newbury, Mass.] Being an answer to the question, HOW TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD, SO AS TO LIVE IN HEAVEN."

"I will tell you familiarly what God hath done for my soul, and in what train my soul keeps toward himself. I am come to a conclusion to look after no great matters in the world, but to know Christ and him crucified. I make best way in a low gale. A high spirit and a high sail together will be dangerous, and therefore I prepare to live low. I desire not much and pray against it. My study is my calling; so much as tends that way (without distraction) I am bound to plead for, and more I desire not. By my secluded retirements I have the advantage to observe how every

day's occasions insensibly wear off the heart from God, and bury it in self, which they who live in care and cumbers cannot be sensible of. I have seemed to see a need of every thing God gives me, and want nothing that he denies me. There is no dispensation, though afflictive, but either in it, or after it, I find that I could not be without it. Whether it be taken from or not given to me, sooner or later God quiets me in himself without it. I cast all my concerns on the Lord, and live securely on the care and wisdom of my heavenly Father. My ways, you know, are, in a sense, hedged up with thorns, and grow darker and darker daily; but yet I distrust not my good God in the least, and live more quietly in the absence of all by faith, than I should do, I am persuaded, if I possessed them. I think the Lord deals kindly with me, to make me believe for my mercies, before I have them; they will then be Isaacs, *sons of laughter*. The less *reason* hath to work on, [that is, the more entirely reason is perplexed and is at a loss what measures to adopt,] the more freely *faith* casts itself on the faithfulness of God. I find that, while faith is steady, nothing can disquiet me; and when faith totters, nothing can establish me. If I tumble out amongst means and creatures, I am presently lost, and can come to no end; but if I stay myself on God, and leave him to work in his own way and time, I am at rest, and can sit down and sleep in a promise, when a thousand rise up against me. Therefore, my way is not to cast beforehand, but to walk with God by the day. Sufficient unto the

day is the evil thereof. I find so much to do continually with my calling and my heart, that I have no time to puzzle myself with peradventures and futurities. As for the state of the times it is very gloomy and tempestuous. But why do the heathen rage? Faith lies at anchor in the midst of the waves, and believes the accomplishment of the promise through all these overturning confusions and seeming impossibilities.

"Upon this God do I live, who is our God for ever, and will guide us unto death. Methinks I lie becalmed in his bosom, as Luther in such a case, [viz. when beset with troubles.] I am not much concerned; let Christ see to it. I know prophecies are now dark, and the books are sealed, and men have all been deceived, and every cistern fails; yet God doth continue faithful, and faithful is he that hath promised, who will do it. I believe these dark times are the womb of a bright morning.

"Many things more I might add, but enough. O brother! keep close to God, and then a little of the creature will go a great way. Maintain secret communion with God, and you need fear nothing. Take time for duties in private; crowd not religion in a corner of the day. There is a Dutch proverb, "Nothing is got by thieving, nor lost by praying." Lay up all your good in God, so as to be able to overbalance the sweetness and bitterness of all creatures. Spend no time anxiously in forehand contrivances for *this* world. They never succeed. God will turn his dispensations another way. Self contrivances are the effects of unbelief. I can speak by experience.

Would men spend those hours they run out in plots and contrivances in communion with God, and leave all to him, *by believing*, they would have more peace and comfort. I leave you with your God and mine. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit."

"God of my life, whose gracious power,
"Thro' varied deaths my soul hath led,
"Or turn'd aside the fatal hour,
"Or lifted up my sinking head!

"In all thy ways thy hand I own,
"Thy ruling Providence I see;
"Assist me still my course to run,
"And still direct my paths to thee."

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

Of a Life of special signs and manifestations, as compared with a Life of Faith.

The views, which have been taken of the life of faith, will aid us in forming a proper estimate of a tendency, which is often noticed among the followers of Christ, to seek for signs, tokens, and manifestations, as the basis, in part at least, of their full reconciliation with God, and of a holy life. We are aware, that this tendency arises, in some cases from ignorance; but there can be no doubt, that it has its origin chiefly in that dreadful malady of our nature, the sin of UNBELIEF. But considered in any point of view, and as originating in any cause whatever, we cannot regard it as otherwise than wrong in principle, and as exceedingly injurious in its consequences. In reading, not long since, the Memoirs of the pious and devoted Lady Maxwell, our attention was directed to a Consecration of herself to God, at an early period of her life, conceived in terms, which, as it seemed to us, a more matured judgment and a more advanced experience of God's faithfulness, such as she had in the later periods of her life, would not have entirely approved. The portion of this interesting act of

Consecration, to which reference is here particularly made, is as follows. "If thou, Lord, wilt manifest thy dear Son to me, clear up my evidence of my interest in him, shed abroad his love at all times in my heart, and let me feel him ever drawing me to himself with the cords of love, and in times of trial make his strength perfect in my weakness, and not desert me in duty nor in temptation; if thou, Lord, wilt do these great things for me, then, in thy strength, I give myself unto thee, soul, body, and spirit, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten."—It seems to be a fair inference from these expressions, that this pious lady had an earnest desire, at the period of making this consecration, to devote herself entirely to God; but that she had not faith enough, or perhaps we might properly say, she was *afraid* to commit herself without reserve into the hands of her heavenly Father, which is the true idea of consecration; and without which no act of consecration can be of any value. In other words, she had not faith enough to make this important surrender or renunciation of self, (a renunciation which is so indispensable to a full realization of the inward life,) without some special testimony of his favor; some inward sign, some specific feeling, something, probably not very definitely represented even to her own conceptions, which should assure her, antecedently to the full surrender on her part, of the divine acceptance.

Many persons, who have seen and have corrected the error, and are now living the true life of

faith, can testify, that, in the earlier periods of their experience, they have hesitated and been perplexed in a similar manner. And as the subject is practically one of great importance, it may be proper to introduce here some instances and illustrations, in addition to what has already been said. "My anxiety," says a religious person, whose experience is given in a recent publication, "for advancement in holiness increased. My mind became exceedingly burdened. I was convinced, that I must make a new and ENTIRE consecration of myself to God, yet shrunk from such a total surrender. I sometimes felt, that if the Lord would make some communication to my soul, as a PLEDGE that he was ready to meet me, and would grant sufficient grace in case I entered into such solemn covenant to be his, I could then venture to engage to live henceforth for him alone; but, through weakness of faith, *I dared not venture forward upon his naked promise.* No such aid to my faith, however, was granted. I saw that the surrender must be UNCONDITIONAL."

Says another writer in the same Work, "I continued seeking for light on this subject, when one night, after a severe struggle with unbelief, I covenanted with the Lord, that, if he would keep me from all sin through the next day, I would then believe that such a state might be enjoyed on earth. All was now calm. I rose in the morning, in the same peaceful frame of mind; and at the close of the day I could not but acknowledge, that I had enjoyed something, to which I had ever before

been a stranger. An incident occurred, which, at any other time, would have excited feelings of anger; but it did not, in the least, disturb the deep quiet which reigned within. The time had arrived for me to fulfil my covenant promise. But, alas, unbelief triumphed; and I desired ANOTHER SIGN, which was the continuation of this full salvation for one week. I thought this manifestation of saving grace would put the doctrine beyond any further doubt. But I had had sufficient evidence. I had persisted in unbelief; and my request was not granted."*

The signs, tokens, or manifestations, which both those who are seeking religion in the first instance and those who are aiming at its highest attainments, not unfrequently ask for, either in express words or by the hidden language of the secret tendency of the mind, are various; but the most of them may probably be brought together under three heads or classes.—The FIRST class are those, which are external; sometimes an object of vision addressed to the outward sight; sometimes a sound addressed to the outward hearing; or some remarkable combination of circumstances in relation to our persons or families; or something peculiar and striking in God's providences; or perhaps the suggestion of passages of Scripture of a certain character; or the personal appearance of the Savior, revealed either outwardly or inwardly, but as distinctly as if present to the outward vision. The manifesta-

* Guide to Christian Perfection, Vol. I, p. 266; Vol. II, p. 173. See also further illustrations of this subject, Vol. II, pp. 31, 202; Vol. III, p. 221; and Vol. IV, p. 184.

tion, which was made to Paul in his journey to Damascus, when he saw a bright light shining from heaven, and heard a voice, and perhaps also that of Stephen, when he saw the heavens opened and beheld the Savior at the right hand of God, were of this class.—The SECOND class are those, which are internal, in distinction from those which are external; but still are essentially of a perceptive or intellectual nature; that is to say, are not necessarily attended with an effect upon the heart. A person, for instance, may inwardly and intellectually have a revealed perception of heaven, of angels ascending and descending, of bright and rejoicing companies of the saints, or of anything else which is a matter of knowledge and revelation, whether it has relation to the world of happiness or the world of woe. Such manifestations are not seen outwardly or by the outward sense; but when they are really from God, are made known by a divine communication operating in the intellectual part. And this is done so distinctly as entirely to control belief; though it is not necessarily attended with holy emotion. We have an instance of this in the apostle Paul, when, without knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body, he was caught up, as it were, into the third heavens, and beheld things unutterable.

The THIRD class are peculiarities in emotive and affective experience; in other words, the existence of specific emotions and affections of a peculiar kind; such as a peculiar strength and fulness of joy, or a deep and silent awe, or an indefinable

melting of the heart in rapturous exstacies. And not unfrequently we characterise the emotion or affection, which we seek for as the sign or testimony of our good estate, by its likeness to the alledged experience of some of our religious acquaintances. In other words, we desire a form of experience like theirs; not only resembling it in its nature, but resembling it in its modifications or peculiarities. It is the peculiarity, the specific character of the thing, which in these cases, more than the thing itself independently of the peculiarity, seems to constitute the sign.

But whatever the specific thing may be, there can be no doubt as to the general fact, viz. that a special experience of some kind, either inward or outward, either in the perceptions or the feelings, is often desired and sought after, and is sometimes made an absolute condition, both by those who are seeking religion in the first instance, and by those who are seeking the additional grace of sanctification, before they are willing to trust themselves in the hands of God to be wholly and unreservedly his. A striking proof of the deep distrust and unbelief of the human heart; and how blind man is when left to himself; and how surely he would rush to his own destruction.

We reccollect to have read the Life of a pious woman, a member of the Presbyterian church, (and it is by no means the only one which has come within our notice,) which seemed to us to be an illustration of what has been said. We refer to the Life, published many years since in Scotland,

of Miss Elizabeth Cairns. There is reason to think, from the statements which are given in this interesting Memoir, that the Spirit of God operated upon the mind of this devout person from early life. But not having received suitable instructions in the nature of true religious experience at an early period, she seems to have been led very thoroughly into the system of living by special manifestations and those high emotions, which are apt to be attendant on them. When she had manifestations, (which is perhaps the best term we can find, though not an unexceptionable one, for the peculiar form of her experience,) especially if they were remarkable ones, she was exceedingly happy. She regarded them as the tokens of the divine favor; and it was but natural that she should rejoice. But when they were withdrawn, a mental reaction almost invariably took place, and she became exceedingly miserable; so that her life exhibited an unpleasant alternation of elevations and depressions, of the joyful and of the terrific, of rapture and of wretchedness. In her seasons of desertion, as she regarded them, her temptations were great and almost overwhelming. It almost seemed to her darkened view, as if the very being, as well as the presence and glory of God, was blotted out of existence. Some good people, who sympathized in her desires after holiness, endeavored to instruct her in a better way; but she had so long lived upon special and powerful illuminations, which she had been in the habit of regarding as the only sure signs and testimonies of her good estate, that she found it difficult

to understand their views, and still more difficult to put them in practice. She speaks particularly in her Memoir of an experienced christian friend, who, perceiving the temptations and wretchedness that followed her seasons of high manifestations, endeavored to aid her. This person told me, she relates, "that I must part with that life, or I must go out of the world; as also she told me of a life of FAITH a Believer lived by in this world; and that sensible manifestations were reserved for eternity. And by similitude she taught me, that Christ did with his young converts, as a woman doth with her child, when it is young. She carries it in her arms and leads it by the hands; but when it comes to more strength, she lets it walk alone, and take a fall, and rise again, and yet her love is still the same. So doth Christ with his people. In their first entry into his way, he manifests much of his love to them; but when they come to more experience, he withdraws SENSE from them that they may be taught to walk by FAITH; but yet his love is still the same to them."—"This," she adds, "was good advice: but, alas, I knew not how to take it." At a later period of her life she remarks, "I did not know a life of *faith*; but still pursued a life of sense, foolishly thinking with Peter, to dwell in the mount of *manifestations*. O the great mistake I was in! For although the Lord had graciously visited me with many earnests and pledges of his love, and thereby satisfied me as to my interest in the common salvation, yet I did not know that I should have submitted to his will, and

put a blank in his hand as to more extraordinary allowances."

The consequence of this mistake was, as has already been intimated, that this pious individual was exposed to many internal troubles. She gives us to understand, that, in the intervals of her more extraordinary experiences, she felt the ragings of sin in her; was in deep sorrow; had at times but little access in prayer; was tempted to impatience, atheism, and self-destruction. And we may very properly ask here, as she had made up her mind, ignorantly perhaps but yet truly, to walk by special and extraordinary manifestations and illuminations, rather than in the simple and self-crucifying, the humbling and purifying way of faith, the way in which Prophets, Patriarchs, and Apostles trod, could we well expect it to be otherwise? When we arrive at the true and fundamental element of a holy life, we shall find, that God has but one way. And we may be assured, that He will honor and bless his own method of holy living and no other.

The remarks, which have been made upon this case, will apply very well, in many particulars, to the religious experience of Miss Anthony, formerly a resident of Newport in Rhode Island, and a member of the Congregational Church. Her life was written by Dr. Hopkins, a man well known for his theological labors. It exhibits the same traits, though not in an equal degree, with those which characterize the Memoir which has just been remarked upon. It is well known, that there are

many Memoirs of pious persons, which are almost wholly made up of marked and wonderful manifestations, sometimes purely intellectual and consisting of what may be called spiritual revelations or discoveries, and sometimes accompanied with great joys and raptures; but which are generally characterized by being followed with long intervals of darkness, temptation, and oftentimes of sin. Accordingly the whole life of the person, in many narratives of this kind, is a series of alternations of these very diverse states, whereas a life of simple and childlike faith in God's word, based upon an unreserved and permanent consecration, keeps the soul, as it were, in equilibrium; converting darkness into light, removing rocky and precipitous obstructions, and making all things even. It is certainly an important question, whether such written and published Memoirs as have been mentioned, are so useful reading for the religious community, as they are generally supposed to be. I have often been deeply impressed with the conviction, that they tend, in some important respects, to give an erroneous view of the true nature of the religious life. They do not sound to me like the life of Paul, and still less like the life of the Savior. And yet they are generally regarded as more interesting, and are undoubtedly much more exciting, than the lives of those eminent Christians, who persevere in the even and delightful tenor of their way, thinking but little of themselves and much of Christ, but little about their own happiness and much about the glory of God; like Thauler of the fourteenth

century and the author of the Imitation of Christ, like Fenelon and Leighton of later times, like Edwards and Wesley, who lived and labored and suffered, in the fulfilment of a constant consecration, and in the exercise of a constant trust in their Heavenly Father.

(1.) In view of what has been said in this chapter, we remark in the first place, that God does not design, that men in the present life should live by means of specific signs, testimonies, or manifestations, but by simple faith alone. The great design of the Gospel, in its practical and final result on man, seems to be to restore and firmly establish the lost principle of faith, as the true and only available basis of the religious life. And there seems to be a necessity that it should be so. From the nature of the case there never can be any true reconciliation and harmony between God and his creatures, until they can so far have confidence in him as to receive his declarations, and to draw their life, as it were, from the words, which have proceeded out of his mouth. In any other way of living, whatever may be the nature of their inward or outward experiences, they live at variance with the order and the plans of God; out of the line of his precepts, and of course in the same degree out of the range of his blessings. And hence it is, that we find the remarkable expressions of the Savior to the doubting disciple. "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have NOT seen, and yet have believed."

And we desire here as a matter of some impor-

tance, to lay down a practical test or rule on this subject. It is this. Whenever we desire a specific experience, whether inward or outward, whether of the intellect or the affections, *antecedently to the exercise of faith*, we are necessarily in so doing seeking a sign, or testimony, or something, whatever we may choose to call it, additional to the mere declaration and word of God. There is obviously a lingering distrust in the mind, which jostles us out of the line of God's order; which is not satisfied with his way of bringing the world into reconciliation with himself; and under the influence of which we are looking round for some new and additional witness for our faith to rest upon. In other words, although we may not be fully conscious of it, we desire a *sign*. In the language of the experienced Mr. Fletcher of Madely, "we want to see our own faith," a state of mind, which, as it requires sight to see our faith with, in other words a basis of faith additional to that which God has already given, is necessarily inconsistent with and destructive of faith. This simple test will aid very much, in revealing to us the true state of our hearts. We repeat it, therefore, that we may in general know, whether the experience which we are seeking, is or is not, of the nature of a testimony or sign required of God as the condition of our faith and obedience, by the mark which has been mentioned, viz. when we seek for it, whatever it is, *antecedent to that exercise of faith*, which is willing to leave what we desire, and everything which has relation to us, submissively in the hands of God.

(2.) We remark again, that the life of specific signs, testimonies, and manifestations, is not only evil by being a deviation from the way of faith; but is evil also by keeping alive and cherishing the selfish principle, instead of destroying it. He, who seeks to live in this manner, instead of living by simple faith, and who thus shows a secret preference of specific experiences, modelled after his own imaginations of things, to that pearl of great price, which is found in leaving all things with God, necessarily seeks to have things in *his own way.* The way of faith is the way of self-renunciation; the humbling and despised way of our personal nothingness. The way of signs, testimonies, and manifestations, is the way of one's own will; and, therefore, naturally tends to keep alive and nourish the destructive principle of selfishness. The lives of those, who attempt to live in this way, with some variations in particular cases, may be regarded as an evidence of the general correctness of these remarks. They seem like children brought up in an unwisely indulgent manner; not unfrequently full of themselves, when they are gratified in the possession of their particular object, and full of discouragement, peevishness, and even of hostility, which are the natural results of the workings of self, when they are disappointed.

(3.) We observe, in the third place, that another evil of that system of the religious life, which is based upon signs and upon preconceived and prescribed manifestations and experiences, is, that it exposes persons to alternations and reverses of

feeling, which are injurious to the subjects of them, and are prejudicial to the cause of religion in the eyes of the world. Remarkable manifestations and experiences, (and those, who have entered into this system, are not generally satisfied with anything short of what is remarkable,) are usually, and from our present physical and mental constitution, perhaps we may say, are *necessarily* of short continuance. While the manifestations or specific experiences, whatever they may be, continue, the mind is in a state of wondering and generally joyous excitement. But when the termination of these seasons comes, which is commonly proximate in proportion to their wonderful nature, then succeeds the period of mental depression, of darkness that can almost be felt, of horrible temptations; Satan saying to the soul continually, where now is thy God. And how can it well be otherwise, when those, who take this erroneous course, pray and wrestle, oftentimes perhaps without being fully aware of it, for sight rather than for faith, and for revelations which gratify the natural curiosity, rather than for righteousness, which purifies the heart.

(4.)—We observe again that it is impossible, as it seems to us, for God to bring a soul to the highest results of religion and truly to sanctify it, so long as it continues in this disposition of seeking a sign, and attempts to live spiritually by means of signs; or that in any other way proposes to regulate God, and to prescribe conditions to Infinite Love. One expression, and a very satisfactory

one, of sanctification, is, UNION WITH THE DIVINE WILL; in other words, having no will but God's. "He, that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." And it is this union of spirit with spirit, of will with will, which God especially requires. And just so far as there is a divergence of the human will from the divine, just in that degree it is very evident, there is, and must be, a want of holiness. Now God's will, (and in the infinitude of his perfections it cannot be otherwise,) is, that we should trust Him, both his character and his declarations; that, in respect to his various dealings with us, dealings which of course indicate his designs and purposes, we should lie submissive and passive in his hands; and that the language of our hearts should be at all times, "even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." But he, who seeks a sign, an inward or outward testimony, a specific and preconceived manifestation of any kind, as the basis of the inward life either in its beginning or its advancement; in other words, who says to the Lord, do this thing or that thing, whatever it may be, and then I will give Thee my heart and believe in Thee, obviously fails to exercise the required trust in God. And consequently, being wanting in the true spirit of harmony and union with God, he cannot rightly be regarded, while remaining in this state, as a person, to whom the character of sanctification or holiness either is, or can be properly ascribed.

(5.)—We remark, finally, that a life of faith, in distinction from a life of manifestations, is not ne-

cessarily, as some seem to suppose, exclusive of *feeling*.—The difficulty, which exists in the minds of those, who entertain the idea, that a life of faith is a life without feeling, arises from that limited view of things, which considers faith in its own nature, exclusive of its relations and results. And it may be well to say here, that a thing is never properly understood, and cannot be properly understood and known, unless it is understood and known in its relations and results, as well as in itself. And on this ground, therefore, we assert, the relations and results of faith are such, that it is a great mistake to say, that a life of faith is a life without feeling.

In our inquiries into the nature of the religious life, we wish, if possible, to ascertain the foundation principle, the corner-stone. And we cannot have any hesitation in saying, both from the Scriptures and from the nature and reason of the thing, that this principle is, and must be FAITH. Undoubtedly there may be feeling of some kind without faith; but there cannot be truly acceptable *religious* feeling without it. Faith must precede. I think we may lay it down as a fixed and unalterable principle, that any feeling, however strong it may be, which exists antecedent to faith, or which exists irrespective of faith, can never be relied on as of a truly religious and saving value. But if the true doctrine is, that faith should go first, it is nevertheless true, that feeling will come after. In all cases where there is faith, (we mean *religious* faith, viz. in God, in Christ, and in all divine declarations,) feeling in its various forms, and what is very

important, the right kind of feeling, will naturally and necessarily flow out. It will be such feeling as God approves; it will be such feeling as filled the bosom of the Savior while here on earth; always appropriate to the occasion, sometimes gentle and sometimes strong, sometimes characterized by joy and sometimes by sorrow, always bearing the marks of purity and benevolence, but always, when the exercise of faith exists in the highest degree, distinguished by the beautiful trait of calmness and peace.

We might pursue this important subject further; but we leave it with a single observation, accompanied by a reference to an experienced and able writer. We desire it to be understood as consistent with what has been said, that such specific signs, revelations, and manifestations, and also such peculiarities of the more inward and affective experience as have been referred to in the present chapter, are good in their place. And if it be inquired what their place is, the proper answer seems to be, when they are sent of God, *unsought by the creature.* If God, in the wisdom of his unsearchable providence, sees fit, for special purposes and on special occasions, to make remarkable revelations of eternal things, as he did on a few occasions to Stephen, and Paul, and John, or in any other ways to impart some marked peculiarities to our experience, we are to receive them in a becoming temper of mind. And to such occasions the humble Christian, who is deeply impressed with his own igno-

rance and dependence, and desires nothing but that he may be holy, will cheerfully leave them.

"If God indulge you," says Mr. Fletcher of Madeley, "with ecstacies and extraordinary revelations, be thankful for them; but be not exalted above measure by them. Take care, lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them; and remember that your Christian perfection does not so much consist in building a tabernacle upon mount Tabor, to rest and enjoy RARE SIGHTS THERE, as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud Caiaphas, to the judgment hall of an unjust Pilate, and to the top of an ignominious Calvary. Ye never read in your Bibles, 'Let that glory be upon you which was also upon Stephen, when he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and said, *Behold! I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*' But ye have frequently read there, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'"

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

On the Entire Subjection of the Will.

Perhaps it is not well understood, but it is certainly true, that one of the greatest evils to which we can be exposed in our present fallen condition, is to have a WILL OF OUR OWN. It is not meant by this, that we may not have a will different from that of our fellow men, nor is it meant that we may not have a strong, energetic will; but that it is one of the greatest evils, perhaps the very greatest to which we can be subject, to have a will of our own, in distinction from, and at variance with the divine will. In this last sense, he who approaches nearest to an annihilation of his own will, approaches nearest to the state of perfect union with God. The prostration of our own will, in such a sense that it shall not in any respect oppose itself to the will of God, seems to be the completion or consummation of those various interior processes, by which the heart is purified. The moment our faith in God wavers, that moment we begin to form our own plans and to set up our own wills. The moment we cease to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to desire earnestly a conformity

to the divine image, that moment we begin to see the movements of a will operating in its own way, and throwing itself out of the line of God's blessed wisdom. So that we can have no hesitancy in saying, that a will perfectly coincident with the will of God, is at the same time the natural result and the highest evidence of a sanctified heart. When the will in its personal or self-interested operation is entirely prostrated, so that we can say with the Saviour, "Lo, I come to do thy will," then the wall of spiritual separation is taken away, and the soul may be said, through the open entrance, to find a passage, as it were, into God himself, and to become one with Him, in a mysterious but holy and glorious union. Then, and not till then, can it be truly said that the warfare against God has ceased, and a perfect reconciliation taken place, enabling those who have arrived at this blessed state to exclaim, with the Savior, (perhaps in a modified but still in a true and most important sense,) "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE."

"The highest mystery of a divine life here," says the learned and pious Dr. Cudworth,* "and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere *obedience to the divine will.* Happiness is nothing but that inward sweet delight that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights

* Cudworth's Criterion of the true knowledge of Christ; a sermon preached before the English House of Commons, March 31, 1647.

against him, but SELF-WILL. This is the strong castle that we all keep garrisoned against heaven in every one of our hearts, which God continually layeth siege unto; and it must be conquered and demolished before we can conquer heaven. It was by reason of this self-will that Adam fell in Paradise; that those glorious angels, those morning stars, kept not their first station, but dropped down from heaven like falling stars, and sunk into this condition of bitterness, anxiety, and wretchedness, in which they now are. They all entangled themselves with the length of their own wings; they would needs will more and otherwise, than God would will in them. And going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude, the more they struggled they found themselves the faster pinioned, and crowded up into narrowness and servility, insomuch that now they are not able to use any wings at all; but inheriting the serpent's curse, can only creep with their bellies on the earth. Now our only way to recover God and happiness again, is, not to soar up with our understandings, *but to destroy this self-will of ours.* And then we shall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free air of perfect liberty, which is perfect happiness."

Wherever there has been this entire prostration of the will, a great and effectual work has been accomplished in the soul. And it will show itself in a number of important particulars.

(1.)—In the first place, the person whose will is

entirely subdued, so as to be one with the divine will, will discover an unruffled meekness and quietness of spirit, when called in the Divine Providence to endure the smaller and more frequent inconveniences and vexations of life. Nor is the evidence, which is thus presented of an entire subjection of the will, to be regarded as inconsiderable and unimportant. It is truly sad and humiliating to see many, who, in the comparative sense of the term, are good Christians, that are, nevertheless, uneasy, and are inwardly and outwardly vexed, on many trivial occasions. Some little disappointment in business, an unfavorable remark which is scarcely worth notice, some small and perhaps accidental inattention on the part of others, disturbs and agitates the soul, not only to its own injury, but to the pain and injury of beholders. A soul that is at rest in God by the real subjection of its will, easily surmounts these trials. Such an one moves spiritually in too high a sphere, is too much occupied with the infinitude of the great object of its love, to regard as an insult every small neglect of the forms of politeness. It has neither time nor disposition to require an explanation of every idle word that may admit of an unfavorable import; nor will it suffer itself to be thrown into peevishness and ill humor at the many little jarrings and frictions, on whatever occasions they may arise, which are almost inseparable from the machinery of human life.

(2.)—The same meek and subdued temper of mind, the same subjection of the will, will show it-

self, in the second place, in connection with what may properly be called AFFLICTIONS. The man, whose will has passed from his own unsafe keeping to the high custody of a divine direction, has no disposition to complain, when God, in his holy providence, in depriving him of health, of property, and friends, has laid waste his fairest earthly prospects. He has perfect faith in God that he will do all things well, and so far from indulging in repinings and murmurings, he blesses the rod that smites him. This remark will apply not only to the loss of health, property, and friends; but will apply equally well to the loss of intellectual gifts, to the loss of the powers of reasoning, of language, and the like. We know that the Christian virtue, to which we now have reference, is exercised to some extent by Christians, who fall far short of the grace of entire sanctification; but it is exercised perfectly and in the highest degree, only by those whose wills are entirely subdued.

(3.)—We remark, thirdly, that the entire subjection of the will is seen in the quietness and silence of spirit, with which misrepresentations and persecutions are endured. That the people of the world should be greatly agitated, and should find in themselves the movings of a rebellious and belligerent spirit, when their motives are aspersed and their characters injured, is entirely natural. And, unhappily, when persecution arises, we see too much of this unquiet and rebellious spirit, even in those whom charity requires us to recognize as Christians. Not so with those Christians of a high-

er grade, whose wills act in perfect harmony with the divine will. That they are afflicted, when they they are subject to unjust persecutions, is true; but they are not rebellious; they are not disquieted; and although they are afflicted, they are not unhappy. They connect with the instrument which troubles them, the hand of God, which permits the agency of that instrument. Strong in a faith which has become habitual to them, they see everything in its relation to the divine mind. They regard the persecutions they endure as the lot which God has appointed to them; and as such they rejoice in it. But this could not be, if their wills, renouncing all private and selfish modes of action, did not move harmoniously with the divine will.

(4.)—A perfect subjection of the will discovers its good fruits, in the fourth place, by entire meekness and submission under God's interior and spiritual dealings with the soul. There are certain spiritual gifts, which God in his unspeakable mercy has pledged himself for Christ's sake to give to his people; and which they may always have for the asking, if they will ask in the spirit of consecration and faith. God will never under any circumstances withhold from his people purity of heart, the spirit of submission, forgiveness, and love; nor any of those pure and lovely traits of temper and disposition, which characterized and perfected the nature of Jesus Christ. But there are other spiritual gifts, which are rather of an intellectual than an affective character, and belong

rather to the head than the heart, such as the gifts of knowledge and of ready expression, and the mere perceptive or cognitive manifestation of heavenly things, which might gratify the curiosity more than improve the affections. These things God gives or withholds as he pleases; catching one up, like the apostle Paul, into the third heavens, where he sees and hears unutterable things; and keeping another, so far as illuminations of this kind are concerned, in a state of comparative ignorance and abjection.

Nor is this all. He oftentimes mingles bitterness in the cup of those, to whom he has given the purest and holiest affections. The Savior himself was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And for wise reasons, especially that they may learn the great and indispensable lesson of walking wholly by faith, he often leaves his people not only to sorrows from without, but oftentimes to heavy sorrows within. But the Christian, whose will is entirely subdued, will drink this portion also. All he asks, and what he feels he *must* have, is HOLINESS; and if with this cup of God and of angels, his heavenly Father sees fit to mingle some ingredient of bitterness, to remind him of his former sinful state, and to teach him more fully the way of submission and faith, he cheerfully accepts it. God may take from him all mere intellectual manifestations of spiritual things; he may even deprive him of the ordinary intellectual powers, and reduce him almost to a state of idiocy; he may pour into his heart the deepest amazement and grief, and yet

his language is, "Not my will, O God, but thine be done." He knows, notwithstanding his afflictions, that he is dear to God; and that his name is written on the heart of infinite love. He knows that he is just in that place where God has seen fit and best to place him; and that he endures just what God sees best he should endure; and he would not even now, though thick darkness is around his path, exchange his position for that of angels.

(5.)—Finally, as embracing nearly the whole subject, the man, who has experienced the practical annihilation of his own will, does everything and suffers everything precisely *in the order of God's providence.* It is the PRESENT MOMENT, considered as indicating the divine arrangement of things, which furnishes the truest and safest test of character. Holiness requires the fulfilment of our whole duty; and our duty necessarily has relation to the facts which God's providence now presents before us. If our whole soul goes forth in obedience to what his holy providence now imposes on us, then, and not otherwise, are we acceptable in his sight. It is necessary, therefore, to keep our eye fixed upon God's order of things. We must do this in relation to our place and situation in life, whatever it may be; not murmuring at our supposed ill lot; not giving way to any eager desires of change; but remaining quietly and humbly just where God has seen fit to place us. We must take this course, also, (which is sometimes a more

difficult thing,) in relation to our duties. We must not only do the right thing, but must endeavor to do it it in the *right time*; which is not *our* time, or that which mere human wisdom would suggest, but God's time. It is one of Satan's artifices, not merely to prevent the discharge of duties, but when this fails, to prevent the performance of them at the right time; for instance, by infusing in us too great eagerness of spirit, and leading us in our hurry to anticipate the divine order. When he makes us do this, he secures his object in a considerable degree at least; because if we do the precise thing which God requires of us, we nevertheless sin in the *manner* of doing it. It is of the highest importance, therefore, that we should keep our will in complete subjection to the divine moment, the moment of God, which is the present moment. The question which should be ever present, is, what does God require of me NOW? And we are to remember, that God makes known his order in *parts*, and not as a whole; he has *his own* plan and not ours; and he reveals it in his own time and degree, and not in ours. We must receive it, therefore, humbly and submissively, just as he presents it to us; though, in the view of our limited understandings, nothing but clouds and darkness may rest upon the future. It is a mind in this position which God is pleased with; which sees the divine developments in everything that takes place; and which, in every situation, walks in the simplicity of naked faith.

[Francis de Sales, at the end of his religious Maxims, relates the following conversation, as having taken place between Tauler, a learned and popular preacher of the fourteenth century, and an obscure beggar. It is introduced here, as having some connection with the foregoing chapter.]

"A great Divine prayed to God, during the space of eight years, that he would be graciously pleased to direct him to a man who might teach him the true way to heaven. It was said to him at length, 'Go to such a church porch, and there thou shalt find a man, who will instruct thee in the spiritual life.' Accordingly he went, and found a poor beggar very meanly clad. He saluted him in these words, 'God give you a good day, my friend.' The poor man answered, 'Sir, I do not remember that I ever had an evil day.' The doctor said to him, 'God give you a good and happy life.' 'Why say you that?' replied the beggar; 'I never was unhappy.' 'God bless you, my friend,' said the doctor, 'Pray, tell me what you mean.' He replied, 'That I shall willingly do. I told you first, I never had an evil day; for when I have hunger, I praise God; if it rain, hail, snow or freeze, be it fair or foul; or if I am despised or ill-used, I return God thanks; so I never had an ill day: nor have I ever been unhappy, since I have learned always to resign myself to his will, being very certain of this, that all his works are perfectly good; and therefore I never desire any thing else but the good pleasure of God.' Then said the doctor, 'But what if the good pleasure of God should be to cast you hence into hell?' 'If he would do so,' re-

plied the other, 'I have two arms to embrace him with; the one whereof is a profound humility, by which I am united to his holy humanity; the other is love or charity, which joins me to his divinity. Embraced with these two arms he would descend with me thither, if thither he ordered me: and there I had infinitely rather be with him, than in paradise without him.' Hereby the doctor learned that a true resignation to the divine will, accompanied with profound humility of heart, is the shortest way to attain God's love.

After that, he asked him again from whence he came. The poor man answered, *God sent him.* The doctor enquired of him *where he found God.* He replied, 'I found him where I had renounced all the creatures.' 'And where did you leave him?' said the doctor. He replied, 'With the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, and men of charity.' 'But who are you?' says the divine. 'I am a king,' says the beggar. 'Where is your kingdom?' says the former. 'In my soul,' says the latter: 'I have learned to bring into subjection, and to govern my senses, as well outward as inward, with my affections and passions, which kingdom is undoubtedly superior to all the kingdoms of this world.' The doctor then asked him by what means he had attained to such perfection. He answered, 'By silence, watchfulness, meditation, prayer, and the union I have with God. I could find no sure repose, or comfort, in any creature of the world; by means whereof I found out my God, who will comfort me world without end.'"

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

On the Joy of Faith in the want and desolation of all things else.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation" is a declaration of the Savior, confirmed by individual and general experience. Even the most devoted Christians are not exempt. The tribulations, to which the people of God are subject, are internal, as well as external; sorrows of the mind as well as sufferings of the body. Sometimes they are very great. There are some occasions, on which all those subordinate consolations, of which God generally permits his people in a greater or less degree to partake, are taken away. There is left to them neither the vivacity of health nor the consolation of friends; no pleasures of social intercourse; no prosperity in worldly business; no rest from outward persecutions; no cessation from the bitter temptations of the adversary. This, it will be said, is an extreme case; but it is only extreme cases, of which, in the present chapter, we propose to speak. There is reason to suppose, that many souls, whom God designs to bring to the highest degree of purity in this life, especially if they are

disposed to resist and do not render themselves up easily to his great purpose, will be called upon to pass through some heavy and perhaps extreme trials. Such trials seem oftentimes to be rendered necessary. Necessary, not in the nature of things, but on account of the corruption of the natural heart. The possession of internal purity implies the entire crucifixion of self; and this is an operation which the natural heart finds it hard to submit to. Hence it is, that earthly joys are temporarily dried up; that human consolations are taken away; and "the axe is laid at the root" of all the sources of self-seeking and self-enjoyment; in order that the soul may experience the truth and the severity of inward crucifixion.

It is at such a time, and amid these various and unmitigated trials, that the soul sustains itself by FAITH; by what is variously called in different writers, but generally as I suppose with the same meaning, "simple faith", "pure faith", or "naked faith." And there seems to be a marked propriety in these forms of expression; because faith, as the sustaining principle, stands at such times alone. All human supports are removed. On every side there appears discouragement and darkness; and it is by faith and faith only, that the soul is enabled to retain its religious integrity. It is under such circumstances, that faith becomes, as it were, a superior and guiding faculty of the soul; upon which the other, especially the various inferior principles, seem to rest. While the subordinate principles of our nature, the natural desires, and the various

forms of natural affection, are assailed by their appropriate temptations, and sometimes in a very severe and terrible manner, they derive from the sublime principle of faith, which stands in its central position of strength and grandeur, a defensive and repulsive power, which makes them more than conquerors.

But the principle or truth, which we wish particularly to impress upon the reader's mind, in these remarks, is this. When all earthly comforts are dried up, and when faith alone remains as the sustaining principle of the soul, there is an interior consolation, deep and tranquil, flowing out from faith itself. This is a circumstance, which is often overlooked. But it is a great truth, contrary to the opinion of some who do not fully understand the nature of the divine operation in the soul, that there is a JOY IN FAITH. The life of faith, though it may be destitute of every outward support and comfort, is not so desolate in itself, so wanting in every thing that brings inward happiness, as some seem to suppose. It is true, sustained in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and seeking nothing but unity with the divine will, it never aims at consolation as an ultimate object. It thinks more of what God is, than of what he gives. And thus God himself, the great original of all good, becomes the fountain of the soul's joy. And the joy, which is thus experienced, is necessarily a pure joy, uncontaminated by any mixture of self. Ask those pious persons, who in the exercise of faith are endeavoring to lay all upon the altar of God, but who, nevertheless, are

called in the course of his wise but mysterious dealings and providences to pass through the extremity of interior and exterior desolation, if they are sustained by anything in the nature of consolation, and they will readily answer in the affirmative. Their language is, if they have nothing else, they have the consolation which flows from believing. If the sweetness of every other fountain is closed, they still have the joy of faith.

This is one of the unalterable conditions of faith, especially when it exists in a high degree, viz. that it is attended with a pure and tranquil consolation; a consolation so sure and permanent, that we can never be deprived of it, whatever else may be taken away. The soul is led up, as it were, into the mountain of God's protection. In the attitude of calm repose, it remains established on that sublime height with the sunlight of heavenly peace for its companion, while there is nothing but darkness and the roaring of tempests in the vallies below. Such was the pure and sublime consolation, which our Savior experienced, when his heavenly Father had withdrawn from him the manifestations of his love, and left him in extreme and inexpressible desolation of spirit. He still possessed, though apparently and terribly forsaken, the consolation and the joy of faith. He could still recognize the bond of union, and still appropriate, as it were, his Heavenly Father to himself, and say, "*My* God," "*My* God."

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

On the nature of the temptations of a Sanctified Heart.

It is our object, in the present chapter, to give a general outline of the subject of temptations; but particularly of the temptations of a heart, that is so far given to the Lord, that it may properly be regarded as in a state of assurance and of sanctification. Temptations, or tempting objects, are those objects, which are presented by the intellect to the sensibilities and the will; and are of such a nature that they have a tendency to induce or cause in the sensitive part of our nature, viz. in the appetites, propensities, and affections, and also in the will, a wrong action Sometimes the action, to which the temptations lead, is wrong in the FACT of its existence, or in itself considered; and sometimes it is wrong only in the DEGREE of its existence. If the temptations advance in their influence beyond the intellect and take effect in the desires and will, prompting them to action when they should not act at all, or prompting them to a prohibited and inordinate degree of action when they are permitted to act, they are always attended with sin. And in accordance with this general and somewhat indef-

inite statement, temptations may be regarded as presenting themselves to our notice in two aspects or in two points of view.

First.—We observe, in the first place, that the tendency of temptations, in some instances, is, to bring feelings into existence, which, under the circumstances of the case, are wrong in the very fact of their existence, wrong in their very nature, and which therefore ought not to exist at all. The temptation, by a special concurrence of circumstances, or through the well calculated influence of Satanic agency, is precisely adapted to that particular wrong result. And if the feeling, appropriate to the temptation, exists, not only in a degree inordinate and irregular, but *if it exists at all*, it is sin. Our Savior was at a certain time tempted by having the kingdoms and wealth of this world presented before him, obviously with the view of their being desired and possessed by him as a means of personal aggrandizement and enjoyment; but we suppose we give the general sentiment of Christians and of biblical interpreters, in saying, that the temptation went no further, and under the circumstances of the case could innocently go no further, than the thoughts. It had no effect upon the Savior's desires or will; that is to say, it secured no pleased and consentient action; but was instantly rejected.—The temptation presented to the Savior at the same time, to throw himself down from the temple, is equally appropriate and decisive, considered as an illustration of the present subject. It could hardly be considered less than a proposi-

tion under a very specious pretext, to commit himself immediately and fully into the hands of Satan, instead of remaining in the will and under the government of God. Considered intellectually, or rather in reference to the intellect, there is no doubt that the temptation was distinctly perceived and appreciated in itself and in its relations. Without this it could hardly be regarded as a temptation. But it seems very obvious, that it found no entrance into the heart; and the only action, which it did or could produce, in such a pure spirit as the Savior's, was that of decided resistance, resulting in its instant rejection.

In connection with what has now been said in this part of the subject, we proceed to make one or two explanatory remarks. And the first is, that the incipient and what may be called, in the cases we are now considering, the *innocent* stage of the temptation, is, when the object, which embodies the temptation or is the medium of temptation, is first presented to us *intellectually*; that is to say, in our mere thoughts or perceptions; and is there perceived and known, not only as an object, but as an object of temptation. If it stops at the limit of the intellectual action, and does not enter into the heart and the will, there is no sin. It is obviously necessary in all cases of temptation, that the object should exist first in this manner, viz. *intellectually*; in other words, that it should exist in the thoughts, or be perceived and thought of. Without this, viz. the perceived or intellective presence of the object, it is entirely clear, that there could not possibly be

any such thing as temptation. But, as has been observed, the temptation may exist to this extent, and may be perceived and felt by us so far to exist, without sin.

A further remark, which we have to make here, is this. Temptations, limited in their results to the intellectual action, and which do not in any degree take effect in the desires, could not properly be considered temptations, without the physical or natural possibility of a further and sinful action of the mind, without an internal conviction of that possibility, and perhaps we may add, without a distinct sense of danger. Hence, when temptations of this particular character are presented, although they do not take effect in the desires, they are both perceived and felt to be temptations; that is to say, there is a clear perception of their true character, both in themselves and in relation to certain possible results. And in addition to this, there appears to be an instinctive and prompt alarm of the sensitive and moral nature. The desires and affections are not inert and dormant, as some may perhaps suppose; neither are the conscience and the will; but all seem to be penetrated with the sense of imminent hazard, and are thrown into the conscious attitude of repellancy.

Second.—We pass now to another class of cases. In some cases different from those which have been described, the temptation passes the limit of the intellectual action, and actually takes effect in the emotions and desires, and YET WITHOUT SIN. The foundation of this view of the subject is, that there

are many emotions and desires which in their nature are morally and religiously right and lawful, and are wrong only in their *degree*. The temptation, (that is, the object which possesses the seducing or tempting power,) is presented intellectually, just as in the first case; and it is desired, received into the affections, and delighted in to a certain limit or degree. The precise place or mark of this limit or degree will be different under different circumstances; varying with the precise nature of the seducing or tempting object and with the precise position and responsibilities of the person, who is the subject of the temptation. But wherever it may be, it is susceptible of being ascertained in various ways, either by a reference to the commands of God, or by the indications of an enlightened conscience, or by the special operations of the Holy Spirit, and not unfrequently by their combined influence. At that particular limit or boundary in the desires and affections, wherever it may be found to exist, the temptation, in the case of a truly holy person, and in the case of every person who does what is right, necessarily stops; just as in the first mentioned class of temptations, it stops with the limit or boundary of the intellectual action. And in this case also, as well as in the other, there is a conscious perception and feeling of danger, when the temptation approaches the boundary in our desires and affections, which it ought not to pass, accompanied at the same time with an internal and repellent effort of the mind.

A single remark further remains to be made, in

connection with this part of the subject. Looking at the subject of temptations in relation to the intellect, there seems to be ground for saying, that we may properly make a distinction between intentions or thoughts of evil, and evil thoughts. All wandering and unprofitable thoughts, and indeed all thoughts, which have not a connection either directly or indirectly with the glory of God, are evil, just so far as they are at the time under our control, and are susceptible of being made to assume a different and better character. But thoughts of evil, that is to say, ideas or suggestions of some evil to be done, which are introduced or injected into the mind from a source external to itself, or which on certain occasions arise necessarily and involuntarily in the mind, are not evil, unless they are consented to in act or in feeling. The form of expression here will be noticed, viz. so far as they arise *necessarily* and *involuntarily*. If they originate in ourselves by a voluntary movement, and are cherished by our own acts, so as to make us in some sense the authors of our own temptations, they are obviously of a very different character, and are by no means free from sin.

These views seem to present the general outline of the philosophy of temptations; although undoubtedly the subject is not without its difficulties. And all that now remains is, to make a number of remarks incidentally connected with this general sketch, and for the most part of a practical nature.

(1)—And our first remark is, that, in the present life, all persons, not excepting those, who are

most advanced in holiness, are subject to temptations. Even the truly sanctified person is not exempt. Holy persons like others retain the attributes appropriate to man's nature; differing from the same attributes in others in this respect only, that they are deprived of irregularities of action, and are entirely subordinate to the divine will. Accordingly the holy person, or the person in whom faith and love exist in the highest degree attainable in the present life, hungers and thirsts like any other person; he is the subject of the propensities and affections which lay the foundation and which furnish the support of the various family relations; he loves his children, parents, and other relatives, and is the subject of other natural ties and sympathies; he suffers from fatigue and sickness; he is grieved, troubled, and perplexed in various ways; and even displeasure and anger, as is evident from what was witnessed in the life of our Savior, are not entirely excluded. While, therefore, it is our privilege, even in the present life, to be exempt from the commission of voluntary and known sin, it does not appear, retaining, as we do, our constitutional tendencies and remaining subject to constitutional infirmities, that we either have, or can reasonably expect, any such exemption from temptation. We cannot suppose, that any of us, in the present life, can be in a better situation than our Savior, who was "without sin;" but who, nevertheless, "was tempted in all points as we are."

(2.)—A second practical remark, proper to be made in connection with this subject, is this. It is

hazardous to estimate lightly, and to trifle with temptations. The person is greatly wanting in wisdom, who undertakes to make a sport of them, or who delays a moment under the pressure of their influence, when he can possibly escape. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," is a command of Scripture. And the question is well asked in the book of Proverbs, 6 : 27, 28, "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" The Christian, who is desirous of securing fully the approbation of his heavenly Father, must be careful not only to do the right and avoid the wrong; but also to avoid all places and all occasions, which would be likely for any reason to lead him into wrong.

(3.)—We proceed to observe in the third place, that temptations will, in general, be violent, in proportion to the decided resistance which is made to them. And accordingly, although it is perhaps different from what we should naturally expect, the more holy a man is, the more violent at times will be the temptations, which he is called to endure. A person, who yields to temptation either in whole or in part, which is very apt to be the case with those who are not wholly devoted to the Lord, will not be likely to understand its full power. He does not oppose resistance enough to ascertain the strength of the aggressive movement. Satan has no inducement to show his full strength to the man, who yields easily. But, he who is determined to sin not at all, who had rather die than

commit any known transgression, who opposes the broad and upright energy of his whole being to the assaults of Satan, will know the immense power of the terrible enemy, that wages war upon him. And it is the natural result of this general view, that when in the life of practical holiness we have taken some new and untried position, which for the first time we have ascertained to be a true and a safe one, and are undertaking the discharge of some new but obvious duty, we shall be likely, in connection with that new position, to be tried and tempted very severely. Satan will drive us from it if he can. He hates holiness, and every thing which is involved in holiness, and every thing which holiness does. He hates it in general; and he hates it in particulars. And whoever proposes, in aiming at entire holiness to do better in a particular thing, will be likely to find him in the attitude of defiance and resistance just at that point.

(4)—A fourth remark is, that it is the part of Christian duty, to endeavor to understand the nature of temptations. And as included in this, it is our duty to understand their *specific*, as well as their general nature; in other words, their nature in its application to ourselves personally. That, which would be a temptation to one, would not be so to another. The general idea, expressed by the word temptation, embraces not only the object which tempts, but also the subject of the temptation. In particular, therefore, we should study the weak and comparatively defenceless points in our character and situation; those particulars, in which

wrong influences will be most likely to have an effect upon us and to lead us astray.

(5.)—We remark again, when we are doubtful as to the character of the temptation, in other words, when we are doubtful whether the proposed action or feeling is wrong or not, we should be careful to lay the subject before God, and to wait for the instructions of the Holy Spirit, before indulging in the desire or action, whatever it may be. We should remain where we are and do nothing, rather than run the hazard of doing wrong. The language of the Apostle is applicable in a case of this kind. "Whatsoever is not of faith [that is, is not done in the faith or belief of its lawfulness] is sin."

(6)—A farther remark to be made is this. In seasons of temptation, it is highly important, that we should remain *recollected*, and in the exercise of true patience of spirit. The adversary of our souls gains great advantages at such times, if he can succeed in disturbing our peace. And in order to help us in retaining this valuable state of mind, we should always remember that our heavenly Father is present in temptations, as he is in every thing else. It is true, he is not the tempter, but he *permits* the temptation; and he permits it, however mysterious it may sometimes seem, both for our good, and for his own glory. And the temptation, however threatening it may appear, and from whatever source it may come, will not be allowed to go farther, than he shall see to be connected with those great objects. This consideration should have great influence with us. It should exclude disquieting

thoughts; it should keep us in perfect submission and peace, till the day of our visitation be passed.

(7)—In cases of especial temptation, we are protected and saved in an especial manner, by the exercise of FAITH. Here, as elsewhere, faith is the great secret of our power; so much so as apparently to be the only method of quenching the fiery darts of the adversary. The tempted person, if he is in the exercise of grace adequate to the occasion, instantaneously offers up the prayer of faith. He exclaims, in spirit at least, if not in language, "Preserve me, O God, in this hour of need." "Spare me and help me in this time of trial;" "Leave me not to fall into the hands of my great enemy." He not only *desires* this assistance, which is one element of the prayer of faith; but what is equally important, he believes that God hears; and that in accordance with many promises, such as "his grace is sufficient for us," and that he "will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear," he is, in fact, present with him, to aid, protect, and bless. This is especially true of the person, who has experienced the eminent grace of interior sanctification. Having learned to live by faith, which to many is a new and hidden way of living, his prayer ascends to the throne of God, with great rapidity; so that it meets and confronts the temptation, as soon as it is presented to his thoughts. And not only this, being the prayer of living faith, it is a *mighty* prayer. It is true, it is exceedingly simple in object and in words; being, in this respect, modelled upon the Lord's prayer; but it has power with God; it

touches the heart of everlasting Love; and if we may be allowed the expression, it draws down upon his soul the shield and covering of a Savior's blood. It is in that fountain, in that precious blood, and not in the mere deadness and coldness of his affections, that the fiery darts of the adversary are quenched.

(8)—We would remark again, that the grace, which may meet and subdue the temptations of the present moment, may not be appropriate and adequate to the temptations of any future time. Every day and every moment bring their duties and trials, and need their appropriate grace. There must, therefore, be constantly repeated acts of faith; and by means of faith a constant application of the atoning efficacy of the blood of the Cross; both to preserve against the power of existing temptation, and also to wash the mind from the impurity of its stains, when we have already yielded to it.

We would observe, finally, that temptations are profitable trials of the religious life, and are particularly calculated to purify and strengthen our faith. They are grievous for a time, it is true; but they are calculated to secure, in the end, the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Very few have become strong in faith, who have not passed through great trials. It is said of the Savior himself, that he "learned obedience by the things which he suffered."

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

"Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have."

THE sanctification of the heart and all those various blessings, which are involved in sanctification, depend, not exclusively perhaps, but yet in a great degree, upon two leading principles; FIRST, an entire consecration of ourselves to God, and, SECONDLY, a full and unwavering belief that the consecration is accepted. It is not enough to offer all; but, in the same spirit of reliance on God, we must also believe that all is accepted. It is the belief that God is faithful to his word, and that, in accordance with his word, he will receive and does now receive all that unreservedly lay themselves upon his altar, which seems especially to secure the presence of a sanctifying efficacy. On the contrary, he, who consecrates himself to God, however sincere he may be in the act of consecration, but who greatly dishonors the veracity of God by remaining without the faith of ACCEPTANCE, deprives himself of that mighty power, which faith alone is capable of imparting, and necessarily lies prostrate and exposed to all the dreadful attacks of the adversary.

It is in connection with this view, as it seems to me, that we are enabled to appreciate and correctly understand certain passages of Scripture, which are frequently mentioned in connection with the subject of present sanctification; such as the following. "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11 : 24. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know [that is, have full faith or confidence in him,] that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John v : 14. The doctrine of these important passages is this. In consecrating ourselves to God, and in praying sincerely for those things which are agreeable to the will of God, such as our sanctification, and those Christian graces which are implied in sanctification, we may be certain that they will be given to us, and that they are now given to us, if we have no doubt in God's word. The certainty of the result, when the condition on which it depends is fulfilled, viz. a full belief of the truth of the divine declaration, is necessarily involved in the *veracity of God*; and not, as is sometimes supposed, in the mere fact of believing. This is an important distinction. It is God's everlasting TRUTH, and nothing but his truth which is the real foundation of the great principle involved in these passages. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, that the result cannot take place without the specific

act of faith; because the defect or want of such faith necessarily makes a separation between God and our souls, and especially because the promise of God, which is the true and effective source of the renovating power, is made only upon the condition of the act of faith. As soon, therefore, as God, in aid of our own unavailing efforts, takes away the remains of unbelief and gives us perfect faith in the promise, which by implication involves perfect faith in all the divine declarations, he necessarily gives us the victory. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME." From that memorable moment, whether our emotions are more or less strong, and whether we have had special inward signs and manifestations or not, we truly feel the purifying energy. The principle of faith, perhaps after a long inward strife, has become ascendant. We are now become like little children; we are now "careful for nothing;" living in perfect simplicity of spirit; receiving our daily bread without disquieting thoughts of the morrow; folded and protected in the arms of infinite love.

(1)—There are one or two inferences, which flow out of the views which have been expressed. And the first is, that there is, in reality, no need, as a preparation for sanctification, of much mental excitement, of protracted sighing and lamentation, of long fastings, and macerations and mighty struglings of body. It is true, that some of these things may exist to a certain extent, without being

altogether profitless. But what we mean to say, is, that they do not appear to be absolutely necessary; and there is sometimes danger, especially when there is a disposition to trust in them, of their being decidedly injurious. The process, as it really takes place, may probably be all embraced in a single sentence. "Give all, and take all." Lay all upon the altar, and believe that God, in accordance, with his word, receives it; and always continue in that state of present and entire consecration, and of present and entire faith, and all is done. If God is true, it cannot be otherwise. And we may properly add here, that the experience of very many persons is found to coincide with this statement. They have labored, prayed, suffered, fasted for a great length of time, without securing the great object of their desires; till, at length wearied with this apparently fruitless method of pursuit, they have simply left themselves in the hands of God without reserve; and have believed, in accordance with his own declaration, that he did now accept them. And thus ceasing from their own unavailing efforts, to which perhaps they were secretly but wickedly inclined to attach some personal merit, they have entered, by simple faith alone, into the favor and the rest of God. They are from that moment cut off from the fatal system, which demands a sign or manifestation, either inward or outward, additional to the mere word of God and confirmatory of it, and from all preconceived and self-originated notions of what they should like to have and what they

should not like to have; and have become, as already remarked, like little children; willing to let their heavenly Father guide them, without imposing upon him any conditions, willing to have much or little, to be wise or to be ignorant, to go or to stay, to sit down or rise up, to speak or be silent, to be honored or dishonored, to be on the mount of joy or in the valley of temptation and sorrow, to be any thing or nothing, just as God wills.

(2.)—It is proper to remark further, that the principle, which has been laid down in its general form, is applicable also in particular cases. That is to say, it is not only in this manner, that we may be led to experience the genuine sanctification of the heart in the more general sense of the terms; but it is in this manner also, that we are to receive the particular graces, appropriate to particular occasions, which are involved in sanctification.

It is well understood, I suppose, that the exercises of a sanctified heart are not always the same; but are appropriate to their occasions. If, for instance, I need especial wisdom and prudence, appropriate to a particular trying crisis, I must go to God and ask for it, just as I had done before in relation to the general object of sanctification; FIRST, in the spirit of entire consecration, and SECOND, in the exercise of simple faith. And by faith here, it is hardly necessary to repeat, after what has been said, we mean a faith, which fully believes that God will do, and that he does even NOW accomplish that which he has promised. I recollect to have heard a Congregational minister assert on some

public occasion, that TO PRAY ARIGHT IS TO RECEIVE. This declaration obviously embodies the great principle now under consideration. Many persons go to God and ask earnestly for the things they need; but they appear to have no faith that God will hear them, or that he does now hear them, unless they have a sign, a manifestation, a visible outward sight or an inward audible voice, or the definite experience of some preconceived feeling, or something, (it makes but little difference what it is,) which they expect to use and which they do USE, AS A PROP FOR THEIR FAITH TO REST UPON, instead of letting it rest upon the sure and blessed Word of God. O, the unutterable blindness of the human mind, when left to itself! To look at any thing but the simple declaration of God, and to require anything but that as a ground of belief, is to go directly out of the true path. It is, as it seems to us, deliberately and of choice to throw away those precious gifts which faith imparts. It is made known throughout the Scriptures, deliberately, repeatedly, and with the clearness of a sunbeam, that the life of God in the soul is, and must be, a LIFE OF SIMPLE FAITH. And in the exercise of this faith, it may be regarded as certain, that, when we pray for those spiritual gifts and exercises which we know to be agreeable to the will of God, we shall not only have them, but if the present time is really the appropriate time for them, WE DO HAVE THEM NOW. We do not say, that the specific blessing either comes now or will come hereafter, in precise accordance with our preconceived opin-

ions; but that makes no difference as to the fact. And we may add here, it is the uniform testimony of those who have been enabled to live the life of faith, that they have always found God faithful to his word; they have had wisdom, and humility, and gratitude, and peace of spirit, and purity of heart, just as they have asked for it, when they have asked fully believing in God's promise, and in the actual bestowment of the blessing in its proper time and place, according to the promise.

[The following is an extract from a letter, which I had the pleasure of receiving some years since from a pious young man, a member of the Baptist church, now no longer living. I introduce it here, as illustrating, to some extent, the practical application of the doctrines of this chapter.]

After speaking of his deliverance from his former bondage to sin, the writer adds; "I humbly trust, that God has in some measure taught me how to live, from moment to moment, by *simple faith.* A truly blessed and glorious way. This is the highway of holiness, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. JESUS is now a charming name. JESUS is now all, and in all, to me. I can now say 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I am crucified unto the world.' I found all my prayers, tears, and earnest desires unavailing. I spent days in fasting and prayer. At the midnight hour and at early dawn I prayed for holiness. But still I found my soul destitute of holi-

ness, the pearl of great price. I found this, however, blessed; at times greatly so. And the power of sin was in a great measure broken. At length God was pleased to show me that I must believe, that I *do receive* the things that I ask for. In a moment I saw my error. I had long been convinced, that I staggered at faith; that unbelief was my great sin; and accordingly would direct all my forces to this point. I tried to believe. I prayed for faith. I sought for faith earnestly. Sometimes it seemed that Christ was near me, and the prize almost within my reach; and I would say in my heart and aloud, 'Lord, I do believe;' and then I would watch my heart to see what the effect was. But at this time it was clearly revealed to me, that I was waiting for EVIDENCE, the evidence of *sight* before I would believe; and that I was unwilling to take the evidence God had afforded, viz. his inviolable word and promise. I saw now, instead of praying for faith, seeking for it, looking for and expecting it, I must *believe*. It appeared to me a reasonable command 'Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;' and I resolved, that I would obey this command; for it was my imperative duty. I would believe, because God had commanded it. It seemed a fearful step to take. It was an hour of conflict, but Jesus triumphed. I saw that all other means had failed; and this was my only resource. I accordingly entered into an engagement with God, that henceforth, until faith should be exchanged for sight, I would never doubt; I would live in the *en-*

entire surrender of my whole being to God, believing that He accepted the sacrifice, and that I was wholly the Lord's. I have found my God, a FAITHFUL GOD. And my whole soul exclaims, glory, glory be to Thee, Oh God, for this living way of salvation through faith in Christ. (May a humble, holy life praise my Redeemer for his unspeakable goodness to me, and eternity complete and perfect what time begins.")

"JESUS, the life, the truth, the way,
"In whom I now believe;
"As taught by Thee, in FAITH I pray,
"Expecting to receive.

"Forgive, and make my nature whole.
"My inbred malady remove;
"To perfect health restore my soul,
"To perfect holiness and love."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

On the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

It is a scriptural, and I suppose, a generally acknowledged fact, that the world is now, in a special manner, under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The Father, in conceiving and adopting the plan of man's redemption, may be said, in relation to our apprehension of things in TIME, to have reconciled justice and mercy prospectively. The Son, by coming into the world in accordance with the plan of redemption, and by fulfilling in his death on the cross the indispensable conditions of the plan, rendered this reconciliation not only prospectively, but presently and actually possible. The office of the Holy Ghost, among other things, is to teach men; and by teaching, and other spiritual operations, to induce and enable them to accept and to realize in their own renovated persons and natures all the benefits, which the wisdom of the Father has provided, and which the voluntary humiliation of the Son has rendered possible. The work of man's salvation, therefore, in its practical and personal application, and so far as it remains uncompleted, may be said to be under the direction

of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly when our Savior left the world, he held the following language to his disciples. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." And again, he says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John, 16: 7, 8, 12, 13, 14.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, is to be regarded as the appointed and effective renovator, guide, comforter, and teacher of the children of men. In the moral and religious world all good is from Him; and beyond the reach of his influence, and irrespective of his presence and operations, there is not and cannot be any thing, which is valuable or desirable. There are some reasons for saying, that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit is precisely opposite and antagonistical, in its principles and results, to what may be called the natural dispensation, viz. the law of the natural heart, or the reign of SELF in the soul. Man, before his fall, had a true life in God. He did not live by his own vitality, and flourish upon his own stock. The pow-

er of God possessed its habitation in the centre of his soul; a living, animating, purifying principle. If he possessed, as undoubtly he did, what might properly be denominated natural ability, it was, nevertheless, natural ability, made alive, inspired, animated by an ability out of and above nature. It was enough for him to know and rejoice in the fact that God was the continuance, as well as the beginning of his inward life; that every good thought and good feeling, that all purified activity and divine strength, all holy love and all angelic aspirations, were from God, and from God *alone*. And his apostacy, as it seems reasonable to suppose, consisted in the alienation and dethronement of this inward divine power, and in the substitution of SELF instead of God. In the language of another, "man broke off from his true CENTRE, his proper place in God, and therefore the life and operation of God was no more in him. He was fallen from a life in God into a life of SELF, into an animal life of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking in the poor perishing enjoyments of this world. This was the natural state of man by the Fall. He was an apostate from God, and his natural life was all idolatry, where SELF was the great idol, that was worshipped instead of God." *

The object, therefore, of Christ's coming into the world, was to place men essentially in the condition in which they were before the Fall. Not only to secure their forgiveness, but to make them holy; not only to make them holy, but to make them so,

* Law's Spirit of Prayer, Part I, Chap. 2d.

in the only way in which Adam or any other being was ever made holy, viz. by means of the living and constant operation of God in the soul. Hence the necessity of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Hence the various directions, which are given in the Scriptures, not to grieve, and not to quench the Holy Spirit. Hence the declaration, that Christians are the temple of the Holy Ghost. And accordingly it is a great truth, though but imperfectly understood and estimated, that he, who moves and acts in religious things without the attendant operation and grace of the Holy Ghost, cannot be spiritually wise, and is not in the way to be spiritually benefitted.

(II.)—The object of that peculiar state of things, which may with some good reason be described as the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, will not be completely realized, till all Christians are filled with the presence and the operations of this Divine Agent. And why should not Christians of the present day experience this great inward result, as well as those of the primitive ages? It was said of John the Baptist, even before his birth, "and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." It is related both of his mother Elisabeth and of his father Zachariah, that they were "filled with the Holy Ghost." The apostle Peter and the martyr Stephen are described as being in like manner "full of the Holy Ghost." The disciples on the day of Pentecost are said to have been "filled with the Holy Ghost." Similar language is applied to the Savior. And Jesus, "being full of the Holy Ghost, "return-

ed from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is repeatedly spoken of, probably means, in some places if not in all, the same thing with being filled with the Holy Ghost.

In the times of the Apostles, miraculous powers were connected with the descent and the fulness of the Spirit's operations. The gift of these powers seems to have had special reference to the circumstances of the times, and to have been temporary. But the infinitely greater blessing, the crowning work of the Holy Spirit, that of imparting to the soul the grace of assured or perfect faith and the attendant grace of perfect love, still remains. Now, if the Holy Ghost came into the world to dwell with men, to take up his abode with them and to teach them, if he came to inspire within them the highest possible faith and love, and to procure to them the highest possible purity and peace, then it seems to me, that the object of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost is not, and cannot be completely realized, till it can be said of all Christians, as it was said anciently, that they are men full of the Holy Ghost. Till this is done, there is a resistance in the heart, proceeding from the remaining life of self and from the inspiration and artifices of Satan, which ought not to be. The Holy Spirit is ready, not only to advance, but entirely to accomplish the inward work, whenever the people of God are prepared, with childlike simplicity of spirit and without any reservation, to undergo his sharply searching and purifying agency. It is the spirit of SELF,

showing itself in the forms of distrust and resistance, which obstructs this faithful, but friendly operation; which grieves the Spirit; and prevents his purifying the heart with the waters of the interior baptism.—Let the followers of Christ ponder well these important truths. Let them strive to keep in mind, that they can do nothing well, in the moral and religious sense of the terms, which is not prompted by the presence and suggestions of the Holy Spirit. And certainly that they cannot do ALL things well, bringing every emotion and passion into subjection, and walking always in the commandment of faith and love, without being "*filled*," as the Scriptures express it, with his efficacious agency.

(III.)—An inquiry may arise here, In what manner does the Holy Spirit operate in individual hearts? In relation to the subject involved in this inquiry, it does not appear, that any specific and certain rule can be laid down. The methods of the divine operation appear to be one of the secret things, which are hidden with God. Accordingly the Holy Spirit, so far as the method or manner of his influences is concerned, operates differently in different cases. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell, whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." He sometimes comes with sudden and almost visible efficacy, and produces his results with "observation." But still more frequently, as it seems to us, he comes as a "still small voice," and operates in a

secret and silent manner; but with no diminution of effective power and of inward purification.

"If the Lord be pleased," says Mr. Fletcher "to come softly to thy help; if he make an end of thy corruption by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness; if he drown the indwelling man of sin, by baptising, by plunging him into an abyss of humility; do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for 'when he was wroth and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me—— and stand——and call on his God——and strike his hand over the place——and recover the leper.' Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work; and by this means he disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. 'Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul,' the sweet rest of Christian perfection, of perfect humility, resignation, and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up with 'the good part, and the one thing needful.' But thou frettest; thou despisest this robe of perfection; it is too plain for thee; thou slightest 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price:' nothing will serve thy turn but a tawdry coat of many colors, which may please thy proud self will, and draw the attention of others,

by its glorious and flaming appearance; and it must be brought to thee with lightnings and thunderings and voices. If this be thy disposition, wonder not at the divine wisdom which thinks fit to disappoint thy lofty prejudices; and let me address thee as Naaman's servants addressed him: 'My brother, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he says to thee, *I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God; wash in the stream of my blood; plunge in the Jordan of my humility, and be clean.*' Instead therefore of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin, by gently coming in 'a still small voice,' as by rushing in upon thee in 'a storm, a fire, or an earthquake.'" *

(IV.)—At this place in our remarks, another inquiry naturally arises, How shall a person know, since the modes of the Spirit's interior action are so various, when he experiences the full or completed presence and operations of this Divine Agent? A proper answer, so far as it goes, would perhaps be, that this can be known only by the results of such divine presence and agency. These results, in their entire length and breadth, we will not attempt to analyze at the present time. But will only go so far now as to say, that one of the most decisive marks of the presence of the Holy Ghost in its fullness, is a resigned and peaceful state of the spirit originating in perfect faith in God. In the precise

* Fletcher's Works, Vol. II, p. 650.

state of mind to which we now have reference, there seems to be an entire subsidence or withdrawal of that natural excitability which is so troublesome to the christian; and instead of the eager and unsettled activity of nature, the substitution of a pure and deeply interior rest of the soul, such as was seen in our Savior, and resembling, on the small scale of man's limited spirituality, the sublime and passionless tranquillity of God.

Undoubtedly there are other important marks, characteristic of the inward fullness of the divine power. But this, *if it be rightly understood*, may be regarded as the highest result of the divine operation upon the human mind. It is not, therefore, merely the christian, whose mental exercises are characterized by traits, that are calculated to excite outward observation, that is filled with the Holy Ghost, to the exclusion of others. Still more frequently is this fullness experienced in the hearts of those, who sit in solitary places, unknown to the world; who live in the secrecy of their spirits with God alone; and of whom the multitude around them, ignorant of the interior power which dwells in their souls, know only this, that they perform the religious and temporal duties of life with fidelity and gratitude, and endure its trials and sorrows with silence and submission. We would not have it understood, however, as these remarks might seem to imply, that persons in this calmly peaceful and triumphant state of mind, are destitute of feeling. Far from it. They have feeling; but it is *regulated* feeling. Perfect in degree; but symmetrical in

all its relations; and therefore resulting in that angelic aspect of religious experience, which has been indicated. And the explanation is this. Every emotion is so perfectly adapted to its appropriate object; every desire and affection is kept so perfectly in its position; every volition moves so surely and strongly towards the goal of perfect rectitude; all worldly tendencies and attachments, all hopes and fears, all joys and sorrows are so completely merged in the overruling principle of supreme love to God, a principle which makes all of God and nothing of the creature, that the result is, and of necessity must be, inward quietude;

> "The peaceful calm within the breast,
> "The dearest pledge of glorious rest.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

The Providences of God considered as Interpreters of the inward Operations of the Holy Spirit.

We propose in the present chapter, to enter upon a subject which may justly be regarded as one of especial importance and interest. The proposition, which we lay down and which we design to illustrate, is the following, viz; *We cannot, as a general thing, arrive at the true interpretation and import of the inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit, except by connecting them with, and considering them in their relation to God's outward providences.*

Our first inquiry is, what are we to understand by the providences of God? In answering this question, it does not seem to be necessary for any purposes we have at present in view, to go into the distinction, which is frequently and very properly made, of the ordinary or common providence of God, viz; that which is exercised in connection with secondary causes and in the common course of things; and of the extraordinary providence of God, or that which is altogether out of the common way and has the nature of a miraculous operation. Saying nothing of extraordinary providences, we apprehend, that there is no ordinary or common

providence of God of such a nature, as to exclude him from an actual presence and supervision in relation to all things whatever. It is enough for us to know that the hand of God is either positively or permissively in every thing. In our apprehension, therefore, all events, (excepting such as involve the commission of sin, and even these are to be regarded as permissively providential,) are to be considered as providential in the positive sense of the term. In other words, whatever takes place, sin only excepted, is to be regarded as expressive, in some important and positive sense, *of the will of the Lord*. The controlling presence of the Almighty is there. God is in it. Certainly there is abundant foundation for this view. If God clothes the grass of the field, if not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, if the very hairs of our heads are numbered, how can it be otherwise? It seems to us, therefore, that every true Christian ought to see, and will see, God providentially and positively present, with the exception which has just been made, in the events of every passing moment.

We remark, in the second place, that the presence and agency of God in his providences, is not an accidental thing; but is a result, which has reference to the divine wisdom and choice. Whatever takes place, with the exception of sin, is not only a portion in the great series of events; but takes place in accordance with the well considered and divinely ordered arrangement or plan of things. Accordingly every thing, which takes place, indi-

cates, *all things considered*, the mind of God in that particular thing. And hence we may be said to reach, through the divine providences, a portion of the divine mind; and to become acquainted with it. We do not mean to say, that we possess, in respect to that particular thing, the whole of the divine wisdom; but we undoubtedly possess a portion of it, which is unspeakably valuable. To some extent certainly, it can always be said that God reveals himself. That is to say, he reveals his mind and will.

We proceed to remark again, and in connection with what has been said, that the providences of God are, to a considerable extent, the interpreters of the mind of the Holy Spirit. The mind of God, as it is disclosed in his providences, and the mind of the Holy Spirit, as it reveals itself in the soul are one; and consequently in their different developements from time to time can never be at variance, but will always be in harmony with each other. And not only this, they have a relation to each other, which is mutually and positively illuminative. They throw light, the one upon the other. Certain it is that the mind of the Spirit, in all cases of mere practical action and duty, cannot, as a general thing, be clearly and definitely ascertained, except in connection with providential dispensations. Such dispensations are the outward light, which corresponds to, and throws a reflex illumination upon the inward light. And this is so general a law of the divine operation, that persons, who are truly led by the Spirit of God, are generally and

perhaps always found to keep an open eye upon the divine providences, as important and true interpreters of the inward spiritual leadings. And accordingly we find the following expressions in the Life of Madame Guyon. "My soul could not incline itself on the one side or the other, since that another will had taken the place of its own; but only nourished itself *with the daily providences of God.*" And again, "the order of divine providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted to God. While it faithfully gives itself up thereto, it will do all things right and well, and will have every thing it wants, without its own care; because God, in whom it confides, makes it every moment do what he requires. God loves what is of his own order."*

Hardly any thing, in the conduct of the divine life in the soul, is more important than thus to keep an open and faithful eye upon the arrangements of divine providence. Until the divine intimations within are cleared up and illustrated by the subsequent openings of Providence, it seems to me to be the duty of Christians to remain in the attitude of patient expectation, and of humble and quiet faith. It is true, we may already be possessed of the inward voice, the declarations of the Spirit in the soul. But these inward intimations, *taken by themselves*, may, in many cases, be very obscure. And so long as we do not satisfactorily know the information involved in them and the issues to which they lead; it is obviously a duty to keep looking upward, in a childlike simplicity and

* Life of Madame Guyon, Pt. I, Ch. 27; Pt. II, Ch. 2.

faith, for those further developments, which the openings of Divine Providence may impart.

I have sometimes thought, that there is a similitude or analogy between the natural mind and the spiritual mind, in relation to the subject now under consideration. The natural mind, (that is to say, the perceptive and reflective ability, which is naturally given us,) is adapted in its operations and results to the natural world around us. The ability, which we possess of realizing in ourselves the various auditory, visual, and tactual sensations and perceptions would be of no avail, would be practically useless, without the corresponding sounds, colors, and forms of the external world. The mind, therefore, in some of its important operations, and the external world, are precisely and admirably fitted to go together. They are practically the mutual correspondencies and counterparts of each other. And it seems to be essentially the same with the *spiritual* mind, that is to say, with the mind enlightened and guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The mind is divinely inspired, in the first instance, with thoughts and views, which may be considered as conditionally instructive and binding upon us; but which can be drawn out of this state of conditionality, and be made positively clear and binding, only in connection with those various outward events, which the divine providence is continually developing. As instruments of music will not give utterance to their beautiful sounds, till they are touched and swept by an outward hand, so the inward inspiration of the Ho-

ly Ghost is, to some extent, latent in the mind, and is not susceptible of being distinctly analyzed and heard in its responses to the spiritual ear, until it receives its interpretation from the outward application of providential events. In other words, as the natural mind and the natural or outward world are mutually and reciprocally adapted, so also the spiritual mind and the providential world are mutually correspondencies and counterparts of each other.

Accordingly, although a person may be fully conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit operating upon and guiding his mind; still it remains a great truth, that it is a guidance, which, in some important sense, may be regarded as dependent on those prospective developments, which still remain in God's mysterious keeping. Hence as the interpretation of the inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit exists, in so great a degree, in the correspondent facts and aspects of outward providences, it becomes every one, as has already been intimated, and especially every one, who is seeking to live a truly devoted and holy life, to keep an eye humbly but conscientiously watchful, upon all providential events! As in the expressions which have already been quoted, he should "nourish himself with the daily providences of God."

In connection with the doctrine, which has been laid down, a few incidental remarks remain. And the first is, that this doctrine strikes at the root of too great eagerness of spirit and of all inordinate self-activity. He, who would walk with God, must

walk in God's order. God not only requires us to obey and serve him; but to obey and serve him in his own time and way. In the eye of God voluntary disobedience in the *manner* of the thing, is the same as disobedience in the thing itself. If, therefore, in order to walk with God, we must walk in God's order and must operate with him in his own time and way, it will be necessary for us to subdue our natural eagerness and impetuosity of spirit.

Again, this doctrine is totally opposed to the indulgence of an inactive and sluggish spirit. He, who is seriously disposed to meet every movement of God's providence in the fulfilment of every known duty, will find no time, to be idly and uselessly thrown away. Every moment, as it comes, brings with it its appropriate instructions, and calls for its appropriate duties. It does not always call for *outward* action; but it calls for something to be done. It does not always, nor does it ever, call for a feverish and unreflecting excitement; but, on the other hand, it never approves a listless and unprofitable inactivity. Nevertheless every moment brings its duty, although not always to be fulfilled in the same manner. That duty may be outward action; or it may be inward retirement and conversation with God. It may relate to the improvement of others; or it may have relation to the instruction and improvement of ourselves. It may call us to open and aggressive assaults upon the strong holds of sin; or to the secrecy of the closet and the sacredness of private supplication.

Finally, in view of what has been said, we may

lay it down as a great principle in the practical doctrines of holiness, that a soul, wholly devoted to God, will always endeavor to move calmly, yet firmly and exactly, in the blessed order of the divine providences. Neither prematurely and excitedly hastening in advance, nor yet sluggishly and carelessly lagging behind.

And this truth, be it ever remembered, is one of the leading elementary conceptions, embraced in the great and glorious idea of walking with God. It is noticed by writers on philosophical subjects, that some sorts of motion are pleasant and beautiful to the beholder, while others are not so. And they assert further, that objects in motion are thus beautiful, (for instance, a winding stream or a ship under gentle sail,) partly at least, because they are in harmony with the laws of our own mental movement. But where the outward motion, which we are contemplating is accelerated beyond a certain degree of rapidity, so as to be out of correspondence with the natural movement of our own minds, it at once ceases to be pleasant and beautiful and becomes painful. And so, on the other hand, when the motion becomes unusually sluggish and tardy so as to fall in the rear of the movement of our own minds and retard it, it then also loses its character of beauty. And it is somewhat similar in relation to the providences of God. When the inward operation of the holy soul keeps in exact correspondence with the progress of God's providences, moving in time and place just where he moves, then all is orderly and divinely beautiful.

But when, through unfaithfulness to God's grace, we are jostled out of the divine order, either by going in advance through precipitancy, or falling in the rear through worldly sloth, we are no longer conscious of this divine harmony and beauty. Under such circumstances we necessarily lose, in a considerable degree, the sense of God's presence and favor; and wandering in our own position and out of the divine position, we experience but little else than darkness and sorrow.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

Suggestions to aid in securing the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of the most important questions, which can occupy the minds of those, who wish to experience the reality of the interior spiritual life, is: In what manner can we most certainly secure the ever present and guiding influences of the Holy Spirit? We learn from the Scriptures, that those, who are the sons of God, are led by the spirit of God. And a wo is expressly denounced against those "foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit." * The facts of individual experience, in relation to the subject

* Ezek. 13 : 3.

of a divine guidance, abundantly confirm the truth of the scriptural declarations. "Though this secret direction of the Almighty," says Sir Matthew Hale, who was distinguished as a christian as well as a scholar and a judge, "is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul, yet even in the concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God, and begging his direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call *my own experience to witness*, that even in the temporal affairs of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best direction when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored it." And I think we may undoubtedly regard it as a great truth, ever to be kept in remembrance, that the true children of God, so far as they live acceptably to him, are guided by the Spirit of God. This great truth, that, as followers of God, it is our privilege and duty to be led by the Spirit of God, may be realized continually in our personal experience, as it seems to us, in connection with a few simple but fundamental conditions.

First.—In the first place, we cannot reasonably expect to be guided by the Spirit, unless we *desire* it. And if we expect a continuance of this guidance, the desire must be permanent and strong. It would be extremely absurd to suppose that the Holy Spirit will condescend to dwell with us, if we have no desire for it; or if we have not a permanent and strong desire. But we cannot suppose that those, who aim after holiness of heart, are

without this desire. And therefore we do not consider it necessary to dwell upon this point.

Second.—In order to realize this great blessing, we must have faith in God, that he will do for us the thing which we ask. To desire of God without having faith in the giver, is nearly as effectual a way to defeat the object of our request, as to be without desire. But on this point, also, we will not delay. Who can be ignorant that one of the first elements in the life of holiness is the doctrine of faith? "Without faith it is impossible to please God." How can it be possible, then, without faith to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit?

Third.–Besides those which have been mentioned, there is another condition necessary to be realized, in order to have the guiding influences of the Holy Spirit always with us. Namely, we must cease from our natural activity. We do not mean to say that we must be inactive; that we must be wholly and absolutely without mental movement; but merely and precisely that we must cease from the activity of *nature*. In other words, ceasing from self and from its turbulent and deceitful elements, and as a consequence of this, ceasing to place ourselves and our personal interests foremost, we must keep our own plans, purposes, and aims in entire subjection. For instance, when we ask God to guide us, we must not at the same time cherish in our hearts a secret determination and hope *to guide ourselves*; just as some persons foolishly and almost wickedly ask the advice of their neighbors, when they have already fully decided in their own

minds upon their future course of action. If we would have our desire of being continually guided by the Holy Spirit fully realized, we must not only give up our personal and self-interested plans and purposes, submitting every thing into God's hands with entire childlike simplicity, but it is important also not to give way to uneasy, agitated, and excited feelings. The existence of undue eagerness and excitement of spirit, is an evidence that we are, in some degree, afraid to trust God; and that we are still too much under the influence of the life of nature. So that to cease from the activity of nature, when properly understood, seems to be nothing more nor less, than to cease from the spirit of self wisdom, self seeking, and self guidance, and thus to remain in submissive and peaceful simplicity and disengagement of spirit, in order that God may enter in, and may guide us by the wisdom of his own divine inspiration.

It may be proper to add here, that the view, which has now been expressed, is entirely consistent with the exercise of our powers of perception and reflection. A cessation from our natural activity, in the sense which has been explained, is not only consistent with, but it is evidently favorable to a just exercise of these powers. They will be found at such times to be free from erroneous and disturbing influences, and to possess a clearer insight into the truth.

Fourth.—In order to secure the continual presence of the Holy Spirit, we must not only fulfil the condition of ceasing from the self-interested activi-

ty of nature; we must not only believe in God's truth and faithfulness to his promises, attended with a sincere desire for the blessing under consideration; but when we ask under such cirumstances, it is our privilege and duty to believe, that we now have the thing, which we ask for. If, for instance, in true detachment and simplicity of spirit, and with a sincere desire for the object, we seek the divine wisdom, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, to guide us in some difficult case of duty, we are bound, on the principles of Scripture, to believe, (provided further that we exercise all our powers of perception and reasoning applicable to the case,) that we do now have all that wisdom, which God sees to be necessary for us. Accordingly we are not at liberty, in the spirit of distrust towards God, to go about to seek some new natural light to see our spiritual wisdom with. Such wisdom, resting in its origin upon the immutable promise of God, a promise which is fulfilled in connection with the exercise of faith, is, for the most part, hidden from all forms of sight on the part of the creature, except one. That is to say; as it has its origin in connection with the operations of faith, and cannot exist, except in that connection, so it is visible, in general, *only to the eye of faith.* It seems very evident under the circumstances and in the fulfilment of the conditions which have been mentioned, that we should do wrong, we should sin against God, not to believe in the actual possession of the thing which had been interceded for. It would evidently be a case of UNBELIEF; and unbelief can never be ac-

counted otherwise than a great sin. It is in accordance with this view, that we find the following expressions in the first Epistle of John, 5 : 14, 15. "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us ; And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*"

In conclusion we would remark, that in yielding ourselves up to the divine direction under such circumstances as have been mentioned, we not only have the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but I think we are not exposed to those illusions and mistakes, which might otherwise be likely to befal us. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say, that we may be sure of being kept in the right path at such times. The state of mind which we have described is not only one of earnest desire and strong faith, but as it seems to us, of true *meekness*. And we are told in the Scriptures, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Ps. xxv. 9. It is the opinion of Fenelon, who seems to have had a personal experience of the divine operation deeply interior, that in the moments of mental quietness and of recollection in God, in other words, when we look to God in a state of cessation from our natural activity, we should not hesitate to follow the interior impulses and attractions of the soul. Meaning to be understood, undoubtedly, that if we believingly ask for divine guidance in such a state of mind, the attraction or tendency of soul, which then exists, cannot be safely ascribed to any thing but the Spirit of God; and that, consequently, we

may consider ourselves under a divine, and not under a mere human direction. This we believe to be true. Nevertheless, in this case, as in all others, we should never yield to the guidance of any interior attraction, however it may have the *appearance* of originating with the Holy Spirit, which at the same time we know to be at variance with the written Word of God. God can never contradict himself; and whatever revelation he has made of himself in his holy Word we must regard as authentic, and as entitled to our supreme confidence. But with the limitation implied in this remark, we have no doubt that God, operating upon the mind in a divine manner, will certainly teach and guide those, who, in renouncing the self-interested eagerness of nature, possess true meekness and quietness of spirit, and who believingly and earnestly look to him for such teaching and direction.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

Evidences of being Guided by the Holy Spirit.

It is the object of the present chapter, without professing, however, or attempting to exhaust the subject, to lay down some of the marks or evidences of being guided by the Holy Spirit.

And accordingly we proceed to remark, in the first place, that the person, who is guided by the Holy Spirit, will be eminently perceptive and rational. The operations of the Holy Spirit, in the agency which he exerts for the purpose of enlightening and guiding men, will not be found to be accidental, or abitrary, or in any sense irrational operations. It is hardly necessary to say, that the Holy Spirit is not an ignorant, but a wise Being; not an agent that is moved by unenlightened impulse, but by perfect knowledge. And this being the case, it is a natural supposition and one which will be generally assented to, that his operations will always exist in accordance with and not in opposition to the laws of the human mind. And furthermore, according to the Scriptures, a primary and leading office, though not the only office, of the Holy Spirit is to TEACH men, to lead them into

TRUTH. And if so, then, ordinarily, the first operation will be upon the intellect, in distinction from the sensibilities and the will. And we do not hesitate to say, in point of fact, and as a matter of personal experience, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit, will find that this divine Agent does, in reality, impart an increased clearness to the intellectual or cognitive part of the mind. This divine operation is, for the most part, very gentle and deeply interior; revealing itself by its results more than by the mere mode of its action; but it is not, on that account, any the less real. It seems to put a keenness of edge, if we may so express it, upon the natural perceptivity, so as to enable it to separate idea from idea, proposition from proposition; and thus to guide it, with a remarkable niceness of discrimination, through the perplexities of error into the regions of truth. We repeat, therefore, that one evidence, of being guided by the Holy Spirit, is, that such guidance contributes to the *highest rationality*. In other words, the person, who is guided by the Holy Spirit, other things being equal, will be the most keenly perceptive, judicious, and rational. Not flighty and precipitate; not prejudiced, one-sided, and dogmatical, but like his great inward teacher, calmly and divinely cognitive. The experience of holy men, particularly of those who have made it a practice to ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit on their studies, agrees with this statement.

SECOND.—We observe in the second place, that the person, who is guided by the Holy Spirit, will

possess a quickly operative and effective conscience. This is too obvious to require much remark. It seems to be impossible, that a man should be guided by the Holy Spirit, and not experience a purified and renovated activity of the moral sense. This important result is what might naturally be expected, among other things, from the result on our intellectual nature, which has already been indicated. It is well known that the conscience operates in connection with the intellect, and subsequent in time. There must necessarily be certain intellectual data or facts, as the basis of the inward conscientious movement. And in accordance with this law, in proportion as the truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit developes itself from the intellect, with greater and greater clearness, the action of the conscience becomes increasingly distinct, sensitive, and energetic. It becomes a sort of flaming sword in the soul; and keeps it in the way of life. Accordingly, on this principle, no man who has a dull and sleepy conscience, a rough and blunted edge of moral perceptivity, is at liberty to say, that he is guided by the Holy Ghost.

THIRD.—When we are led by the Holy Spirit, there will be a subdued, tranquil, and well regulated state of the natural sensibilities, in distinction from the moral sensibilities or conscience; that is to say, of the various propensive principles and of the affections. It is well understood, that, when we are led by the world or by Satan, the various natural propensities and affections, which constitute what we understand by the natural sensibili-

ties, are, in general, ill regulated, agitated, and turbulent. A really worldly man is either externally, or internally, an agitated man; generally in movement and generally discordant with himself; resembling the troubled sea, and casting up to the surface of his spirit mire and dirt. On the contrary, he, who is led by the Holy Spirit, with the exception of those occasional agitations arising from *purely instinctive* impulses, which do not recognize the control of reason and the will, is always subdued, patient, quiet. His natural propensities, which, in persons who have not experienced the same grace, are so turbulent and violent, run peaceably and appropriately in the channels which God has assigned to them. His natural affections, which so often become the masters and tyrants of the mind, submit to the authority of conscience and the will. The inroads and shocks of the heaviest afflictions pass over him, and leave his inward submission and his peace unbroken. A divine tranquility is written upon the emotions and desires; upon the affections that linger upon the past and upon the hopes that move onward to the future. In this respect, being under this divine and transcendant teaching, he is like his heavenly Father. The Infinite Mind is always tranquil.

Fourth.—We remark again, that the teachings of the Holy Spirit will have a tendency to beautify and perfect the outward manner, as well as the inward experience. And accordingly he, who is truly under this divine direction, will always find his conduct characterized by the utmost decency, pro-

priety, and true courteousness. I believe it is a common remark, that a truly devout and holy person may, in general, be easily recognized by the outward manner. And this remark, which is confirmed by experience, has its foundation in nature. The natural life, which is inordinately full of self and is often prompted in its movements by passion, pride, and prejudice, will of course develop itself in an outward manner as extravagant, inconsistent, and imperfect, as the inward source from which it springs. Hence it is that we so often see, in the intercourse of man with man, so much that shocks our notions of propriety; so much in word or in action that is characterized by violence or levity; so much that is unsuitable to the time and place. But he, on the contrary, in whom the natural life is slain, and in the centre of whose heart the Holy Spirit has taken up his residence to inspire it with truth and love, will discover an outward manner as true, as simple, and as beautiful, as the inward perfection from which it has its origin. A voice inspired with gentleness and love, a countenance not only free from the distortions of passion but radiant with inward peace, a freedom from unbecoming gayety and thoughtless mirth, a propriety of expression resulting from seriousness of character, a disposition to bear meekly and affectionately with the infirmities of others, a placid self-possession, an unaffected but strict regard to the proprieties of time, place, and station, can hardly fail to impress upon the outward beholder a conviction of the purity and power which dwell within.

Fifth.—We proceed to say further, that he, who is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will always find himself in the position of coincidence and union with the divine Providences. He will not only be in harmony with whatever is true and beautiful in human intercourse; but there will also be no jarring and no points of discordant contact between his conduct and the unerring consecution of providential dispensations. This will be sufficiently obvious, we suppose, without going into any length of remark. It is unquestionable that the will of God, as we have already seen in a former chapter, is made known to a considerable extent, in his providential dealings. Consequently the language of the Holy Spirit will never, in any case, contradict the correctly interpreted language of divine Providence. On the contrary, they will always completely, and, as they have but one author, will necessarily harmonize. To illustrate the subject, the Holy Spirit will never instruct an individual to give to religious purposes a certain amount of property, when the Providence of God, by taking away his property, has rendered the donation an impossibility. Again, the Holy Spirit will never, by an interior teaching, instruct a man to go upon a distant missionary enterprise, when at the same time the Providence of God, by placing him on a bed of sickness, has rendered him incapable of the requisite physical and mental exertion. And if any impressions or convictions, which thus involve a contradiction of the voice of the Spirit and the voice of Providence, should rest upon the

mind of any person, he may be assured that they come from a wrong source, and ought to be rejected. We assert, therefore, that he, who is led by the Holy Spirit, will find his conduct beautifully harmonizing with the events of divine Providence, as they daily and hourly develop themselves. In other words, while he is continually led by the inward guidance to do and to suffer the divine will, he always finds himself acting and suffering in cooperation with the manifested designs and arrangements of God.

Sixth.—He, who is led by the Holy Spirit, will find his conduct, just so far as he is the subject of this divine guidance, in entire harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures. It has already been intimated, that the voice of the Spirit can never be contradictory to itself. And accordingly having spoken in the Scriptures, it can never contradict what it has there said by any interior revelation to individual minds. If, for instance, the Scriptures, dictated by the divine Spirit, have, for wise and adequate purposes, authorized and required the specific observance of the Lord's day, and have authorized and required the setting apart of the ministry, or have recognized and established other institutions and ordinances, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that the same Spirit, in contradiction to himself, will guide individual minds to a disregard and contempt of those institutions. And in like manner, if the Bible, in any case of specific and personal action, requires a thing either to be done or to be omitted to be done, the Holy Spirit, operating on in-

dividual minds, will teach the same thing; and will always lead the subject of his operations to the performance in the one case, and to the omission in the other. And in all cases whatever, as the Holy Spirit, speaking in the heart, and the Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible, necessarily utter the same voice, they will necessarily in their ultimate tendencies lead to the same result.

And we may remark further, in connection with what has now been said, that he, who is led by the Spirit, will *love* to be led by the Spirit. It will be his delight. And under the influence of this divine attraction, he will earnestly strive to ascertain the mind of the Spirit. And consequently he will be led to the Bible, as one of the most valuable means of ascertaining it; he will read it much; he will read it with seriousness, candor, and prayer; that he may know the length and breadth of the divine communications, which are there made. And the pleasing and important result will be, that his life will be characterized by the same traits of submission and love, of regard for the divine institutions and precepts, of prompt and consistent action and of mighty faith, which adorn the lives of those, of whom the Scriptures give us an account.

Finally.—We may remark in conclusion, and as in some sense embracing the whole subject: It is an evidence, that a person is guided by the Holy Spirit, whose whole conduct, whether considered in its particulars or in its general outline, has a distinctly favorable bearing on the promotion of God's glory in the world. The end of all things is the glo-

ry of God. In the promotion of this great object, God, the Holy Ghost, co-operates with God the Father, and God the Son. The Holy Ghost, therefore, recognizes and enforces the great truth, that all subordinate tendencies, that all inferior and private interests, whenever they receive a corrected and sanctified direction, will always converge to the same centre, and will never reach their TERMINUS, if we may so express it, except in the bosom of the adorable Infinite. To this great result, all his interior and individual teachings infallibly tend. To know all things and to love all things in God; to annihilate self in all the various forms of creature-love and of self-will, and to make God the great centre of our being; this only is true wisdom and everlasting life. He, therefore, who is led by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, will be taught that he must think for God, feel for God, will for God, act for God; and that the great reality of God, which is the true beginning and completion of all religious life, must be received into the soul as the paramount motive; and with a power to expel all subordinate motives, and to reign there forever with supreme dominion.

Such are some of the marks by which those may be known, who are led by the Divine Spirit. These are a HIDDEN people. They have intimacy with the Highest; but they are, nevertheless, the little ones, that are almost unknown among men. Rational with the highest degree of rationality, scrupulously conscientious, ever desirous to learn the will of God as manifested in his Word and Providences, mod-

est and sincerely courteous and becoming in their intercourse with their fellow-men, and governed under all circumstances by a supreme regard to God's glory, they pass calmly and devoutly through the world, blessed in themselves and a blessing to others. And yet the people of the world, blinded by their unbelief, but little know and little value that interior instruction, by which they are thus guided to the illuminated heights of evangelical perfection. Happy is he who is led, not by mere sights and sounds; not by strange and momentary impressions, which may come from the disordered senses, from the world, or from the devil; but by that clear light which illuminates the intellect, the conscience, and the heart; which is ever consistent with itself and with God's Word and Providences; and which has in reality for its author, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

On the voice of God in the interior solitude of the soul.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, [that is, into the retired or solitary place,] and *speak comfortably unto her.*" Hosea 2 : 14.

It seems to have been a favorite idea among some of the philosophers of ancient times, and also, to some extent, among the serious and reflecting of later periods, that seasons of solitude are propitious to inward teachings. Certain it is, under certain circumstances and positions in its history, that the soul, in proportion as it ceases to be perplexed by outward and worldly influences, appears to increase its inward receptivity, and does actually become the subject of pleasant and purifying visitations, which bring not only peace, but truth. Perhaps it may be said with truth, that no man has ever become truly eminent, even in the worldly sense of the term, that no man has ever been able to perfect the great works of literature and art, who did not love solitude. It is in solitude that the soul, no longer wasted in the frivolities of social and congregated life, gathers up the fragments of its powers, and learns the mighty secret of its refreshed

and consolidated strength. It was not in the splendid court of Augustus, but in the retirement of Mantua, and on the banks of the Mincius, that Virgil wrote his enduring poems. It was in the solitary vales of Vaucluse, and not in the palaces of Avignon, that the works of Petrarch were composed. In poverty, in seclusion, and in blindness, and not in the turbulence of the political arena, and amid the convulsions and labors of public life, did Milton perfect his great work, the Paradise Lost.

But if it be thus evident, both from their example and testimony, that seasons of solitude are important to the philosopher, the orator, the poet, and indeed to all men who aim at great intellectual results, they are certainly not less essential and indispensable to the Christian. Without seasons of retirement, in which the Christian can commune with the conversations of his own soul, he necessarily lives a weak and evaporated life, destitute of the fulness of interior strength, and without the record of outward and aggressive victories. If philosophers, and orators, and poets, in rejecting the company of men, have found that higher inspiration, which they have fictitiously ascribed to the company of the Muses, how much more shall the Christian, by rejecting, so far as he can consistently with duty, the unnecessary social and conventional requisitions which are constantly made upon him, be visited with the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and be clothed with the baptism of God. But without delaying further upon these general remarks, we proceed now more minutely to the following considerations.

(1.)—There are two kinds of solitude, viz., the EXTERIOR and the INTERIOR. Both have their appropriate place and their appropriate value. Exterior as well as interior solitude has its worth. Who that has mingled much in the assemblies of men and has been involved in the perplexities of worldly business, in the strife and the turmoil, the jealousies and the cupidities of corrupted human life, has not often thought of the blessings of retirement, and sighed for the hour and the place of solitude; some vale, which has heard the voice only of its own woods and waters; some mountain, untrodden by human footsteps, where the soul could cease from its agitations and enter into rest? Charles the Fifth, one of the familiar names of history, whose ambition and power had agitated Europe for more than half a century, resigned his authority in the latter part of his life, and spent the remainder of his days in the secluded monastery of St. Justus. He felt deeply, that territorial acquisitions offered but a poor compensation for desolations of the heart, and that retirement alone could give what society and the activities of public stations had taken away.

But there is an authority on this subject, which will have more weight with the Christian, than any other name which can be mentioned. Our blessed Savior had his seasons of retirement. Often, attended by a few companions, and not unfrequently alone, he retired by day, or in the silent hours of the night, to the garden of Gethsemane, to the shades of Olivet, to solitary places in the wilderness, by the sea side, or in distant mountains. His

pure soul felt the wearisomeness of this vain world; and it was in the holy recollection of retirement, and in solitary communion with the Infinite Mind, that he gained strength for the severities of his dreadful conflict and for the glories of his final triumph. Happy is he, who can at times separate himself from the perplexities and the cares of the world, which, in their natural tendency and their direct action, are so unfavorable to tranquillity of spirit and to union with God.

(2.)—But there are some persons, who are so peculiarly situated that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for them to possess the privilege of this exterior retirement. And this leads us to remark, in the second place, that there is an inward or interior retirement, which, in its nature and its applications, is far more valuable than that which is exterior. Indeed, outward solitude can scarcely be regarded as having any value whatever, except as it tends to promote the solitude and sacred repose of the mind. If, therefore, you are so situated as to have no opportunities of exterior solitude, no shaded gardens and no secluded valleys into which you can retire, let it, nevertheless, be your endeavor to secure, at suitable times, the greater blessing of interior seclusion, the solitude of the soul. The contaminating influence which we chiefly fear, and which we would keep at a distance from us, exists in the world; in the contriving, agitating, speculating, contentious, evil world. By exterior solitude we keep the world from our persons; by interior solitude we banish it from our minds.

Alban Butler, the learned author of the Lives of the Saints, in speaking of Catharine of Sienna, who had been deprived of her usual opportunities of religious retirement, remarks; "If any thing grieved her, it was the loss of her dear solitude. But the Holy Ghost, that interior faithful master, to whom she listened, taught her *to make another solitude in her heart;* where, amidst all her occupations, she considered herself always as alone with God; to whose presence she kept herself no less attentive, than if she had no exterior employment to distract her."

But the question arises here, On what principles is it that we may possess and retain the great blessing of true inward seclusion? And in answer to this question, we may justly remark, among other things, that one of the great aids of interior solitude is silence from unnecessary words. It was the prayer of the Psalmist, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." He that hath not power over his tongue, that he may cease when he pleases from the vain babblings of men, can never enter into interior retirement. Such a person has within him a spirit of outward communication, which necessarily draws him out of himself. One of the first duties of those who would possess interior solitude, and thus make advancement in the religious life, is to possess and to maintain an absolute control of "the door of the lips."

Another assistance in entering into this desirable state is by means of cessation from wandering and unnecessarily discursive thoughts. There are

some persons, who exhibit what may be called an incontinency of mental action. They seem to have lost, in a great degree, the power or rather the disposition, to control the principle of thought; and may be regarded as gadders abroad speculatively, if not bodily. The inordinate and unrestrained intellectual activity, which characterizes such persons, must not only be retrenched and corrected; but the mind, in the process and the result of restriction and curtailment, must be made to revolve around the great central idea of God alone. This idea, fixed in the mind to the exclusion of every thing else or of every thing which is not related to itself, may be regarded as the central pillar in the temple of interior solitude. And furthermore, the mind, in its withdrawment from other objects and its concentration upon this great idea, should act contemplatively rather than in the way of speculation; and by a fixed or unitive view rather than by a separative and discursive process. It is not the fragmentary but the unitive idea; in other words, the idea of God, not in the elemental and disjointed aspect of his separate attributes, but in the inseparable complexity and entireness of his actual nature, which attracts, fixes, and absorbs the mental view. The mind, withdrawn from outward objects, and embracing by a single act this immense and consolidated idea, ceases from all discursive action, (that is, from all action which has not a natural and close connection with the central idea,) and enters into what may properly be called a state of intellectual repose. And where should a

created and necessarily inferior mind, and which in consequence of its inferiority is likely to be troubled and perplexed on many subjects, where should such a mind, even in its speculative action, find rest, but in that central idea of the Infinite Mind? Attaching itself to the idea of the Infinite by one concentrated and firmly adhesive effort, the ideas of inferior things, which float around it like summer insects, have lost their power to trouble it, and may be said virtually to have no existence. And accordingly it may be said to dwell, even speculatively or conceptively, that is to say, considered as a mere principle of perception and thought, *alone with God.*

And again, in this state of mind, if a person be a truly consecrated or sanctified person, he will experience, (and this is of greater consequence to the full realization of internal solitude,) a cessation from internal agitation, in the region of the emotions and passions. We do not mean to say that the emotions and passions will necessarily be extinct in their action. But what we mean is this: As they flow out on their appropriate occasions, they maintain their true and appropriate position; there is no discordance, no jarring, but true inward peace. That peace which the Savior seems to have had in view when he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." The world, in all that is not connected with the great idea of God, has departed from view. Its petty interests, its competitions, its strifes, its clamors pass by unheeded. Its distant sounds fall noiseless upon the mental ear.

The soul is lost in adoration; lost to the world, but alive to God; shut out from the exterior and visible, but shut in with the invisible one; deaf alike to the solicitations and teachings of men, but with open ears to the instructions of the great Teacher. Its language is, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." He does well who enters into his closet in the literal sense, but he does better who enters into the mental closet, and having shut the door interiorly, prays to his Father, "who seeth in secret, and his Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward him openly." (And it is an obvious remark, that the closet of interior solitude is, to a considerable extent, within the reach of every man, and especially of every Christian. In the bustling street and in the clamorous forum, in the market place, in the Senate, in all places of common and public resort, it is the Christian's privilege, (a privilege which money cannot purchase and power cannot wrest from him,) to shut the door of outward communication and be alone with God. O delightful retirement! O blessed retreat from noise and folly! It is then that the soul knows the embraces of its Beloved, and hears "divine philosophy" indeed.)

(3.)—This subject is particularly interesting and important, in connection with those who have experienced the blessing of sanctification. It may be regarded as a first and unchangeable truth, that God cannot be absent from any thing that is holy, however remote, however insignificant it may be. In the nature of things it is impossible. From the first moment of the soul's restoration to purity, how-

ever cast out and wretched it may have been before, it recognizes the approach of the Divinity. From that memorable hour it enters into a divine companionship, which neither time, nor place, nor power, nor selfish men, nor confederated devils, can delay or separate. God's love to a truly purified being is infinite, and nothing short of infinite power could keep him even for a moment from a most intimate and essential union with such a holy soul. No matter in what outward condition that soul may be, no matter how unknown and unhonored among men, it has no sooner become purified in the baptism of holiness, than it shines infinitely more brightly to the omniscient eye than the purest and brightest star of his own glittering firmament. Prompted by the unchangeable principles of his infinite nature, He comes to his own, and it can no longer be said that "his own received him not."

On this interesting subject, viz. the necessary union of a sanctified soul with God, I have often read with interest a passage in the writings of Dr. Cudworth. Speaking of holiness, he says, "If it be but hearty and sincere, it can no more be cut off and discontinued from God, than a sunbeam here upon earth can be broken off from its intercourse with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dirt of this world. Holiness is something of God wherever it is. It is an efflux from Him, that always hangs upon him, and lives in Him; as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they

are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun from whence they flow."

But although God, in point of fact, is always intimately united to souls that are in sanctification, such is the limited nature of the human mind, and so many are the objects in the present life which necessarily occupy its attention, that it is not always consciously percipient of his presence. And hence the advantage of interior solitude; the inestimable value of that silent and hidden retreat within, where the soul can find the Bridegroom, who is always present without always being known. It is then she hears his voice, and like the spouse in the Canticles exclaims. "He that brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me is love." It is in interior solitude that he speaks, because the inward ear, no longer occupied by the noise and discords of the world, is prepared to listen. We may lay it down as a great practical and religious principle, that God does not, as a general thing, speak efficiently to an inattentive ear. His honor is too much concerned to teach those who are unwilling to attend. He speaks too in the "*still small voice*," and hence he is necessarily understood in proportion as there is the greater inward silence. And where there is not some degree of interior solitude by a withdrawment of the thoughts from the world, and by a meek and subdued stillness of the passions, may we not even say, that the divine message, the voice of the Holy Ghost, is not and cannot be heard at all? How great, then, is the loss of those who are stunned by the confusion and

clamor of the things without, and hear not the teachings of the "still small voice!" How great is the folly as well as the loss of those who are willing to accept the babblings of fallen human nature for the conversations of the unsullied Divinity! O, my God, may I enter into this calm rest of interior solitude, that thou mayst speak, and that my soul may hear. In the language of one, who knew thee and loved thee, I would say, "O God, who art the truth, make me one with thee in everlasting love! I am often weary of reading and weary of hearing. In thee alone is the sum of all my desires. Let all teachers be silent: let the whole creation be dumb before thee; and DO THOU ONLY SPEAK UNTO MY SOUL."*

It is the unagitated soul, (unagitated, not because it is inert and stupid, but because it has shut out disturbing outward influences, and has entered into the rest and purity of perfect love,) to which God especially communicates himself. God is ever ready to communicate himself. God is love; and LOVE, whose nature it is to go out of itself for the good of others, lives by communication. The true and available activity, therefore, is to put ourselves, by inward retirement, in the attitude of quiescent and reverential reception; to open the door, as it were, for the divine entrance; to seek God by seeking a deliverance from every thing ,which opposes the admission of God. Love, which is active without weariness, and may be said to labor without toil, will find us out, if we do not hide ourselves in

* Author of the Imitation of Christ, Bk. I, Ch. 6.

the dark corners of this miserable and selfish world. Well has the poet Wordsworth said of the teachings of nature, and much more, when it is properly understood, (viz. as inculcating a cessation from our own wisdom that we may become receptive of a higher wisdom,) can it be said of the teachings of religion;

"Nor less I deem, that there are powers,
"Which of *themselves* our minds impress;
"That we can feed this mind of ours
"In a wise *passiveness*.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
"Of things for ever speaking,
"*That nothing of itself will come,*
"But we must still be seeking?"

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

Of the excision and crucifixion of the natural life.

["And if thy right eye offend thee, PLUCK IT OUT, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, CUT IT OFF, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Mat. 5: 29, 30.]

MAN, in his state of rebellion, has formed for himself a new centre. To that centre, which is his own selfish interest, he has bound himself by an almost infinite number of ties. Hence the necessity of the process of Excision; a process often exceedingly painful; but inevitable to him, who would be relieved from his false position, and put in harmony with God. There must be a CUTTING OFF, and a renewed and repeated CUTTING OFF, till the tree of Self, despoiled of its branches and foliage, and thus deprived of the nourishment of the rain, the sun, and the atmosphere, dies down to its very root; giving place, in its destruction, to the sweet bloom of the tree of life.

We have formerly had occasion to say, that a life of practical holiness depends essentially upon

two things: FIRST, upon an entire consecration of ourselves, body and spirit, to the Lord; and SECOND, upon a belief that this consecration is accepted. We must, in the first place, offer up our whole being as a sacrifice to the Lord, laying all upon his altar. But we should remember, it is laid there, in order that the natural life may be consumed, and that there may be a resurrection of the true spiritual life from its ashes. He, therefore, who has consecrated himself to God, must expect that the truth of the consecration will be tested by the severity of an interior crucifixion, which is the death of nature, but in the end present and everlasting life. It is not till the flame has come upon us, and we have passed through the fire of the inward crucifixion, which consumes the rottenness and the hay and stubble of the old life of nature, that we can speak, in a higher sense, of the new life; and say, CHRIST LIVETH IN ME. But this subject, which is vitally important in connection with the highest results of religious experience, will be better understood by going into some particulars.

(1)—In the first place, God will require of us, in the fulfilment of our act of consecration, that we shall separate ourselves from all inordinate indulgences of the senses. Undoubtedly there is a degree of natural pleasure, connected with the use of the senses, which is lawful. But it is very obvious, that self in the natural man has polluted every thing here. It is in connection with the senses, that we find one of the strong ties, which bind man to his idols, and subject his proud spirit. This

strong bond must be sundered. No one can be acceptable to God, who does not crucify and reject every form of attraction and pleasure from this source, which is not in accordance with the intentions of nature, and does not receive the divine approbation and sanction.

(II.)—We are required in the second place, to crucify the natural affections, interesting and important as they are, so far as they are not purified in divine love and made one with the divine will. These affections, even in their more amiable and lovely forms, often gain an ascendency in the mind, and exercise a tyranny over it, which is inconsistent with the restoration of unity with God. How many persons make idols of their children, or of other near relatives! It is very obvious that such strong attachments, though they may be dear as the right hand or the right eye, must be crucified and cut off. "He, that loveth father or mother," says the Savior, "more than me, is not worthy of me. And he, that loveth son, or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. He, that findeth his life, shall lose it; *and he, that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.*"

(III.)—We proceed to remark in the third place, that, in the process of entire separation from any and every reliance out of God, we must cease to place undue confidence in men generally. It is a matter of common remark, that the natural man, afraid to put his trust in God alone, generally seeks advice and assistance from his fellow-men; especially from those, who are in some degree conspicuous

for information and influence. Those also, who have known something of the truth and power of religion, but are as yet beginners in the Christian life, have not unfrequently erred in the same way. Many times, instead of looking to God for help, they have sought assistance from near Christian friends; they have unduly relied perhaps upon their public religious teachers or have sought, in the spirit of distrust towards God, some other exterior source of consolation and support. It is important to observe, however, that the error does not so much consist in seeking the advice and support of men, which under certain circumstances we acknowledge to be very proper, as in seeking it in *an undue degree* and to the exclusion of God. Such is the nature of God, and such are our relations to him, that he cannot possibly admit of a rival in our affections. It is reasonable, therefore, that he should expect us in our troubles to make our first applications to himself; and to lay our trials and wants before him with that readiness and confidence, which we notice in little children, who naturally seek the advice and assistance of their parents, before looking to other sources of support. And we shall always find this course safest for ourselves, as well as most pleasing and honorable to God.

From all forms, therefore, and from all degrees of trust in men, except so far as they are kept in perfect subordination to a higher and ultimate trust in God, there must be a separation. We must learn the great lesson of making God our helper; and not on particular occasions merely, but always.

In the beautiful language of the Psalmist, "*My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him!*"

(IV.)—We proceed to observe further, that, in the fulfilment of our personal consecration and in the further process of renunciation and excision, there must be a separation, a cutting loose from all reliance, as a ground of merit or of self-gratulation in any shape, *on our own works.* It is undoubtedly trying to unsubdued and selfish nature, to attach no value, considered as its own works, to what it fondly calls its good deeds; such as its outward morality, its attendance upon the institutions of worship, its study of the Scriptures, its visits to the sick, its charities to the poor, and other things of a similar nature. These things, it is true, are all good and desirable. We would not, by any means, speak lightly of them. It is perhaps difficult to value them too highly, if we ascribe them, as we ought to do, to the mere favor and grace of God. But by excluding the influence of the grace of God, and ascribing them to his own merit, it is easy to see that a man may make an idol of his good works, whatever may be their nature; and that he may, in the perversity of his spirit, fall down and worship them. We must be willing, therefore, to account our good deeds as nothing; and to regard ourselves, when we have done all in our power, as unprofitable servants; in order that Christ may be to us all in all.

(V.)—A fifth remark, which we have to make in connection with this subject, is, that it is necessary

to cut off and crucify the inward desire, which so generally prevails, for the experience of special signs and testimonies of acceptance with God. There is hardly any Christian, who has not, at some period of his religious history, experienced some perplexity in this respect. One of the most difficult lessons, which we are called to learn, one however which is indispensable, if we would know the heights and depths of the religious life, is that of living *by simple faith.* God expects us, and has a right to expect us to leave ourselves and all our interests in his hands, in the full confidence, that he will do every thing which is right. And it is obviously the duty of every Christian, to correspond to this claim on the part of God, and to yield himself up, body and spirit, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant; fully believing that God will not desert him, neither in duty nor in temptation; and whether he is led in light or in darkness, with sensible manifestations and testimonies or without them, that all things will be well in the end, and will work together for his own good, and for the divine glory. But too often this duty is not regarded. To live by faith, to lean upon the mere word of God without the supports of sight, is a very humbling way of living; and it is hard for the natural man and even for the partially sanctified man to receive it. Nature, so far as it exists in the heart, chooses another method, one more suited to itself, but less glorious to God. Some good Christians have exceedingly perplexed and injured themselves, for a considerable length of time, by attempting to maintain the in-

ward life on the erroneous system of special signs, tokens, and testimonies, such as an audible voice, the application of some unknown passage of Scripture, the occurrence of some remarkable temporal event, the possession of a preconceived and specified state of joyous feeling, or something of the kind, which, in their ignorance or under the influence of remaining self-will, are earnestly sought from God, as the pledges and evidences of their acceptance. Such a system of living has scarcely any affinity, and perhaps none at all, with the true life of God in the soul. The Christian life, we repeat; is emphatically a LIFE OF FAITH; but to endeavor to live in the way, which has just been referred to, is evidently a deviation from the way of faith, and tends directly to strengthen the unspeakable evil of distrust in God.

From every thing of this kind, therefore, we must separate ourselves without hesitation, however painful the process may be. In the spirit of self-crucifixion, we must learn the great lesson of relying by simple belief on the mere declaration of God. And in doing this, we need not fear. What need has the principle of inward faith of any sign or testimony additional to itself? Faith, whenever it is strong enough to be a true light within, will always bear its evidence in its own nature. It no more asks or requires exterior illumination, than the sun in the heavens asks for a taper to learn its own illuminated position. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself."

(VI.)—We remark, in the sixth place, that we

must separate ourselves altogether from any reliance upon religious feelings of any kind, considered as a ground of hope and salvation. We know well, that there can be no religion without religious feelings. No man is, or can be, a Christian without them. They are indispensable. But what we think it necessary to object to and to condemn, is a disposition, which sometimes exists, to trust in our feelings, and to make a sort of idol of them, instead of trusting in Christ. A man, for instance, has experienced at a particular time great sorrow for sin, or high emotions of gratitude, or is sunk in depths of humility. If, at some time after, his mind reverts to those feelings and dwells much upon them; and in such a manner that he begins to place a degree of trust and confidence in them, instead of placing his trust in the Savior, it must necessarily be to his great injury. It is not our feelings, but CHRIST, that saves us. If we look to our feelings for salvation, instead of looking to Christ, we necessarily miss our object. And in accordance with this view, we sometimes find persons, who are continually examining and reexamining and poring over their past experience; but who are generally in much darkness of mind. Probably, without being fully aware of it, they are secretly looking for something in the history of their past feelings which they can place their trust in, instead of turning away from themselves, which would be much better, and looking directly upward to a sufficient and present Redeemer.

This distinction is a real one, viz. between trust-

ing in our feelings and trusting in the Savior, though not very obvious at first; and is highly important in its connection with the religious life. It seems to me, that religious feelings are valuable, and can be valuable, only as they tend, in their ultimate result, to unite us more and more closely to the Divine Mind. If, therefore, we are so unwise as to stop and to rest in our feelings as the ground of our hope, and especially if we take a degree of complacency in them, in themselves considered, or because they may properly be regarded as *our own* feelings, we not only stop short of God, to whom they should lead us; but pervert them, valuable as they are in their proper exercise and relations, to our own exceeding detriment.

We come to the conclusion, therefore, and repeat again, that we should not place any reliance upon our feelings, in themselves considered, as *a ground of acceptance with God*; and also that we should not, in any point of view, take any unduly interested and selfish complacency in them. We must banish and crucify this form of idolatry also, which is none the less dangerous for being so interior and secret. If we will turn our eyes upward rather than inward, and give our hearts and lives to God and his glory in the exercise of naked faith, we shall soon experience a divine reaction in the soul itself. And shall find, that God, who is faithful to his promise, will abundantly take care of us both without and within. We shall then have both the right degree and the right kind of feelings. We shall have no idols, but we shall have God; and

we shall have no feelings that are appropriate to idols, but shall have the feelings which are appropriate to God. And in accordance with this view, and in point of fact, it will be found that of two Christians, the one, who is the most penitent, the most humble, the most grateful, the most devoted in his love, will think the least of those particular exercises. His mind will be, as it were, out of himself. You will see him *living* religion, and not merely talking or thinking *about* religion. Such a person will hardly be conscious of his feelings, considered as objects of distinct contemplation and thought: and will know them chiefly in the blessed result of increased oneness with his heavenly Father. He is not destitute of feeling; but his feeling is, if we may so express it, not so much to trouble himself about feeling, as to lose himself in the will of God. Another mind, viz. "the mind of Christ," may be said to have taken inward possession; and so close is the union, which has now been formed between himself and God, that he finds himself perplexed and at a loss to discover the nature and operations of what he was formerly wont to call his own mind. His state corresponds in a great degree, and perhaps precisely, to what is implied in the expressions of the Apostle, when he says, Gal. 2: 20. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME."

(VII.)—We observe again, it is necessary, in order to the full attainment of what is designed for the Christian, that, in the continuance of this pro-

cess of excision and crucifixion he should cut off and crucify the desire of internal consolations and comforts. We do not mean to imply in this remark, that the advanced and fully established Christian is in a situation, which either directly or indirectly is inconsistent with a full share of pleasurable and happy experience. On the contrary, his consolations, especially when he has found his true centre and has fully united his once wandering heart to the heart of God, are tranquil, enduring, and substantial. But to think of such consolations much, to desire them much, and especially to aim at them as an ultimate object, is the precise way to miss them. I think it is very obvious, that he, who is seeking comfort as an ultimate object, is not seeking God, but seeking himself. He is not seeking religion, in the proper sense of the term; but he is seeking just what he professes to seek, viz. *comfort*. Such seeking is in vain. There is but one ultimate object, at which, as those who wish to know the heights and depths of religion, we can safely aim, viz. God himself; or what may be considered as essentially the same thing, a sympathy of our whole being with the holy will of God.

It will be understood here, that we have not reference in these remarks to temporal or worldly consolations, so much as to those which are internal and spiritual. Nor do we mean to say, that to desire spiritual consolations and comforts is wrong. But what we mean to assert is, that we cannot desire them and seek them, out of the will of God and

as ultimate objects, consistently *with the highest attainments in the divine life.* To seek them in the way they are commonly sought is evidently to nourish the natural life or the life of self, which it is the object of true religion to destroy. The question was once put to a pious person, 'whether she enjoyed herself.' Her answer was to this effect, that she could not speak positively and promptly in regard to herself, because she endeavored to forget *self*, but she ENJOYED GOD. The reply evidently involved a great principle in religion. No one can enter into the true rest of the soul, in whom the principle of self-love exists in any degree, inconsistent with loving God with the whole heart. "Oh, my God," says the pious Lady Maxwell, "hear the cries of one on whom Thou hast had mercy, and prepare my heart to receive whatever Christ has purchased for me. Allow me not to rest short of it. *Put thou a thorn in every enjoyment, a worm in every gourd, that would either prevent my being wholly thine, or in any measure retard my progress in the divine life.*" *

(VIII.)—Again, if we would be what the Lord would have us to be, we must be willing, in the spirit of inward crucifixion, to renounce and reject all other natural desires, and all our own purposes and aims. We do not mean to imply in this remark, that we must be so far lost to feeling and action as to be absolutely without all desires, purposes, and aims, whatever; but that there must be a crucifixion and excision of all desires and pur-

* Life of Lady Maxwell, Chap. IV.

poses, which spring from *the life of nature*, and not from the Spirit of God. In other words, it is our duty, as those who would glorify God in all things, to check every natural desire and to delay every contemplated plan of action, until we can learn the will of God, and put ourselves under a divine guidance. Every desire must so far lose its natural character as to become spiritually baptized and sanctified, before it can be acceptable to God; and every plan of action also must, in like manner, have a divine origin.

This principle, in the doctrines of holy living, goes very far and strikes deep. The desire of knowledge, for instance, is generally considered a very innocent one. But whenever it becomes so strong as to disquiet the inward nature, and thus to perplex our intercourse with God, it is obviously wrong. It ought always, therefore, to be subject to a divine teaching; and to be merged and lost, as it were, like all the other natural desires, in the supreme desire for God's glory; a desire, which evidently is not the product of nature, but which can come from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost alone.

It is a very proper remark to be made also in this connection, that our most intimate friendships, which involve more or less of desire and generally strong desire, must be crucified. We are not at liberty to make an idol of our friends, however excellent their characters or however closely united by natural ties. Such inordinate friendships stand between the soul and God, and hinder it from reaching its true centre; and we do not see, how

they can be regarded in the divine sight as better than any other forms of idolatry. Even if those friends are eminent christians, so much so as to bear the very image and likeness of the Savior himself, we cannot let our affections centre upon them so as to make them the place of the soul's rest, without causing injury and offence to God.

To sum up all, which is to be said here, in a few words, we may probably assert correctly, that we are not to desire anything whatever out of the will of God. In other words, if we find a preference or choice in ourselves, in such a manner as to lead us to desire one thing rather than another irrespective of the will of God, we may justly conclude, that the state of mind, of which we are then the subjects, is a selfish and natural state, and not a truly religious and divine state. It is, therefore, to be rejected; and the mind is to remain without desire, until the will of God can be revealed and take effect in us.

Finally.—We might pursue this important subject much farther. The principle is, that we must cut loose from every thing, which is not God; and as soon as possible. The principle belongs equally to all persons, and each ought to apply it for himself to his own idols.—We leave the subject, therefore, with remarking in the last place, if we would reach the highest results in religion, we must be willing, not only to suffer a separation from all present possessions and pleasures both of body and mind, in subordination to the will of God, but must be willing to leave our eternal interests entirely and quietly in his hands. It is true, God

does not require and does not expect us to be willing, in the absolute and unconditional sense, to be cast off. Nevertheless, in point of fact, if God should see fit to do it, we ought willingly to submit to it, and to glorify his name in it. Because he could not do it without doing what is right; and to wish or expect him to do otherwise than right, would be to expect and desire him to tarnish his own character, to stain deeply and irretrievably his own spotless nature. This no one can possibly do, who loves God with a perfect heart. The language of such an one is, 'Let me rather perish a thousand times and God be holy, than saved a thousand times and God be unholy!' Indeed he knows no salvation, and no possibility of salvation, but in the love of God's holiness. It is that, which occupies his thought; it is that, which fills, dilates, and energizes the soul with the elements and the only elements of substantial bliss.

It will be noticed, that this is said hypothetically or by way of supposition. But we ought to add, that, in point of fact, it is impossible for a soul, that is lost to *itself*, to be lost to happiness. Its extinction to self is necessarily a resurrection to holiness. The death of self is the life of God. Now it is of the nature of a self-evident truth, that holiness cannot be indifferent to holiness, whereever and in whomsoever it may be found. And hence it is impossible for a holy God to cast off or to treat with unkindness any being that is holy. To be holy is necessarily to be saved. The holy are by their very nature one with God; they are bound

to him by an adamantine chain; and it is no more possible for a holy person to be lost, than it is for God to be lost. And yet when the matter is hypothetically presented to the mind by the Holy Spirit, as it seems not unfrequently to be in the later and higher periods of christian experience, we must be willing to resign all promptly and cheerfully into God's hands, whatever it may be.

We would add here, that, when a person has gone through the process of inward crucifixion in its entire length and breadth, the great spiritual result is the complete extinction of all selfishness and of all self-will; a result brought about by means of an entire and unchangeable consecration, attended by the inwardly operating and searching influences of the Holy Spirit; a result, which in the end is so minutely explorative, so thoroughly destructive of those inward influences which obstruct the presence of God in the soul, and withal so painful oftentimes, that it may well be termed the BAPTISM OF FIRE. It is by means of such a process of inward crucifixion, that the natural life dies; and the way is thus prepared for the true resurrection and life of Christ in the soul.

(1.)—In connection with the subject, we would make a few remarks, which seem naturally to flow out of it. And in the first place, some will say perhaps, that this doctrine, if true, is discouraging; that they have not gone through this process of inward crucifixion; and therefore are not christians. But we answer, such an inference would be a hasty one. But I think we may say this also. If such

persons are really christians, they *are now going through this process.* The little leaven is at work, which will ultimately affect the whole lump. God is showing them their idols and slaying them one after another, in order that he himself may enter and occupy their place. We must not think to go to heaven, and at the same time carry the natural life with us. It must be slain, and *wholly* slain, sooner or later.

(2.)—We remark again in connection with this subject, that in some persons, though not in many, the natural man, in the comparative sense of the terms, dies easily. These persons, these chosen ones of the Lord, seem to have an intuitive appreciation of what God justly and necessarily requires. They see with the clearness of light, that it is impossible at the same time to serve God and Mammon. Accordingly they submit themselves to the leadings and the power of God without resistance. They yield readily and willingly, like the lamb that is led to the slaughter; and the result is, that the inward crucifixion, though not less deep and thorough, is personally less afflictive. The Holy Spirit proceeds gently but constantly in his operations; unbinding every tie of nature; cutting loose every ligament which fastens the soul to the world; until it soars away in its liberty, and rejoices, even while here on earth, in the bosom of its God.

(3.)—Other persons, and we may add, the great majority of persons, are not brought to this state of freedom from the world and of union with God, without passing through exceeding afflictions, both

external and internal. And this happens partly through ignorance, and partly and more generally through SELF-WILL. They are slow to learn what is to be done; and equally reluctant to submit to its being done. God desires and intends, that they shall be his; but the hour of their inward redemption not being fully come, they still love the world. They attach their affections first to one object, and then to another. They would perhaps be pleased to have God for their portion; but they must have something besides God. In other words, they vainly imagine that they would like to have God and their idols at the same time. And there they remain for a time, fixed, obstinate, inflexible. But God loves them. Therefore, as they will not learn by kindness, they must learn by terror. The sword of Providence and the Spirit is applied successively to every tie, that binds them to the world. Their property, their health, their friends all fall before it. The inward fabric of hopes and joys, where self-love was nourished and pride had its nest, is levelled to the dust. They are smitten within and without; burnt with fire; overwhelmed with the waters; peeled and scathed and blasted to the very extremity of endurance; till they learn, in this dreadful Baptism, the inconsistency of the attempted worship and love of God and Mammon at the same time; and are led to see, that God is and ought to be, the true and only sovereign.

(4.)—But some will say perhaps, we are thus left alone; we are stripped of every thing which

once gave us pleasure; we are reduced to a state of mere desolation and nothingness. And we may add, if such be really the result, that nothing could be more desirable. But it is necessary to make distinctions here. We are not reduced to an absolute nothingness; a nothingness of existence, of identity, and of personal capability; but to a nothingness of SELF and of the corrupt life of nature. The natural life is taken away; and it is true also, that every idol is taken away, to which the life of nature clung for its support. But there is this consolation, that whatever of true value, external to the soul itself, is taken away in accomplishing the death of nature, is abundantly restored again, and is deprived too of all hurtful power, in the subsequent experience of the reviving life of God. We find that all, which is necessary, is given back to us in the day of our inward restoration; and for the most part increased an hundred fold. But we have been taught a lesson, which it is impossible to forget. We have ceased to be idolaters. We henceforth love the gifts of God in their source more than in their termination, and not so much for ourselves, as for the sake of the GIVER.

(5.)—And this brings us to our concluding remark, that from the death of nature springs a new life, altogether different from that which is crucified and dead; a life born of the Spirit of God, and bearing the image of the Savior. Just so far, then, as the old nature has experienced a crucifixion, and a new nature has taken its place, we are the subjects of a spiritual resurrection in Christ. We

are dead, and we are alive again; dead to the world and alive to God. "If ye then be risen with Christ," says the Apostle, Colos. 3: 1–3, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

And now in the experience of the divinely renovated life, the soul, that is the subject of it, goes forth, not with the marks of external observation, but attended with the Holy Ghost and with power. Such an one has nothing in himself. Self is taken away. But he has all things in God. At this point commences the true Apostolic life. Such an one is a true messenger, set apart to labor for God and to win souls; not by human eloquence and not by the display of worldly pomp; but by the simplicity of holy living and by the word of power uttered in faith.

If thou, Oh God, wilt make my spirit free,
Then will that darkened soul be free indeed;
I cannot break my bonds apart from thee;
Without thy help I bow and serve and bleed.
Arise, oh Lord, and in thy matchless strength,
Asunder rend the links my heart that bind,
And liberate and raise and save, at length,
My long enthralled and subjugated mind.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

Of the new life in the image of Christ.

["Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new." 2d Cor. 5 : 17. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an EXAMPLE, that ye should follow his steps." 1st Pet. 2 : 21.]

THE old life perishes, in order that there may be a new creation in Christ. The deformity of the ancient nature passes away, and the image of Christ in the soul takes its place. And we can try and be assured of the truth of the resurrection from the death of sin, only by its likeness to the life of the Savior. It is a matter of great gratitude, therefore, that the Gospel not only delineates holiness, which is but another name for the true inward life, by means of abstract statements; but represents it visibly and sensibly in the beautiful mirror of the Savior's personal history. This is a mirror, which it is necessary for every Christian, and especially for those who are earnestly seeking the entire sanctification of the heart, to contemplate prayerfully and unceasingly. The more we study the life of Christ, if we do it with a consecrated and prayerful spirit, the more it is reasonable to

suppose we shall be like him. And in proportion as we bear his likeness, will those various imperfections and inconsistencies, which often mar the lives of his followers, disappear.—We propose, therefore, in the present Chapter to mention briefly some of the traits of character, which are conspicuous in the life of our Savior; and which present themselves particularly to our notice and observation; beginning with those, which, in consequence of their close alliance with the constitution of human nature, seem to have a natural as well as a religious character.

(I.)—And accordingly we proceed to remark, in the first place, that the Savior, considered in his human nature, was a man of SYMPATHY. And in making this remark, we mean to imply, that he was a man of sympathy on natural as well as on religious principles; sympathetic as a man, as well as sympathetic as a *religious* man. And as such, it is very obvious from the Scriptures, that he felt a deep interest in all those, who are the proper objects both of natural and religious sympathy; for the sick, for the poor, the ignorant, the tempted, the suffering of all classes and conditions. Although he loved religious retirement, and knew more than any one else the inestimable privilege of being alone with God, he felt deeply the claims of a common humanity; and in obedience to those claims came forth, and lived, and suffered among men; weeping with those who wept and rejoicing with those who rejoiced. He gave no countenance to an exclusively solitary religion; a religion,

which under the name of meditation and prayer, shuts itself up in barren insulation, and has no deep and operative sympathy with men. Where there were wounds to be healed, whether mentally or bodily; where there were tears to be dried up; whenever and wherever he could add to the amount of human happiness or detract from the sum of human misery, he was present.

He deeply sympathized with those, who are the subjects of religious trials and duties; especially with the beginners in the divine life, with the weak ones and lambs of his flock. Accordingly he adapted his instructions to their capacity of understanding; and also to their present degree of advancement and strength of purpose. And hence it is, that, on a certain occasion after having made some communications to his Disciples, he added, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye *cannot bear them now.*" It is expressly said, in allusion to this interesting trait of his character; "a bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench."

It is hardly necessary to add, that those, who, in experiencing the inward restoration, have been raised anew in the image of Christ's likeness, will exhibit this interesting trait in a marked degree. There can be no such thing as a truly holy heart, which is destitute of a pure and deep sympathy.

(II.)—We may mention, in the second place, as a trait somewhat closely allied to that, which has just been specified, that the Savior was susceptible of, and that he actually formed, to some extent,

PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS AND INTIMACIES. It would be unreasonable to doubt, that he had a sincere affection, analogous probably in its nature to the filial and fraternal affections in other cases, to his mother, his reputed father, and his brethren and sisters after the flesh. Certainly we have an evidence of this declaration in part, not only in the fact of his dwelling so long with them as he did; but in the circumstance that, when he was suspended in the agonies of the Cross, he commended his mother to the care of the disciple John. It would hardly be consistent with the doctrine of his humanity, and would certainly be at variance with the many developments of his life as the "son of man," to suppose, that he did not form a strong, personal attachment to the little company of his disciples. It is said expressly in especial reference to his disciples, "having loved his own, which were in the world, *he loved them to the end.*" It is also explicitly narrated, that he loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, the favored family of Bethany, whom he often visited. The disciple John, in particular, is characterized as the disciple, whom *Jesus loved.* As he was set before us as an example, that we should follow him, this interesting trait, which resulted in the formation of friendly and affectionate intimacies, is what we should naturally expect to find in him.——And furthermore, as one, who came to suffer, as well as to act, as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," had he not some need even of *human* sympathy? And if this suggestion be well founded, where

would he be disposed to look for the consolations, which even the sympathy of men is capable of affording, except in the bosoms of those, whom he loved peculiarly and confidentially?

In connection with what has been said in relation to this interesting trait in the Savior, we may remark here, that nature teaches us, or rather the God of nature, that increased and special love, other things being equal, may properly flow in the the channel of the domestic affections. And also that it is entirely consistent with holiness, and not only consistent but a duty, to exercise special love towards those, whether we are naturally related to them or not, with whom we are intimately connected in life, and whose characters are truly lovely.

As Christians, therefore, as those who have experienced or who aim at experiencing the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, we may regard ourselves as permitted, both on natural principles and in imitation of the Savior, to form such personal friendships and attachments as the Providence of God may favor and his holiness approve. Intimacies and friendships, formed on purely worldly principles, have no religious value; and are often positively evil. It is important, therefore, to remember, that all such friendships should be entirely subordinated, as they were in the case of the Savior, to the will of our heavenly Father. If, through the influence of the life of nature, they become inordinate, they are no better than any other idols. It is certain there is much in them that is amiable and

pleasant, that they are authorized by the example of the Savior, and that they seem to be even necessary in our present situation; but like every thing else they must receive the signature of the divine approbation, and must be sustained or abandoned at the call of religious duty.

(III.)—A third remark is, that the Savior exhibited and valued INTELLECTUAL CULTURE. We do not perceive that he at any time showed a disposition, to separate religion from rationality. Even in early youth he exhibited a strong desire of knowledge. It is related of him at the early period of twelve years of age, that he was found in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Jewish religious teachers, "both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all, that heard him, were astonished at his understanding and answers." He knew very well, that religion must have a basis in the perceptions; and that its existence, without some degree of knowledge and reflection, is a natural impossibility. He knew also, that religion cannot be spread abroad from heart to heart, so as to take root to any great extent and become effective in those who are ignorant of it, except by means of the truth. And accordingly he improved his early opportunities of knowing; and while he grew in stature and in favor with God and with man, it is stated also, that he "grew strong in spirit," and that "he increased in wisdom." In particular, he seems to have nourished and strengthened himself intellectually by the faithful study of the divine lessons of the Old Testament. His repeated public instruc-

tions in the Synagogues are a proof of his intimate knowledge of the Scriptures. In all his personal and private intercourse also, even on occasions, which were calculated to agitate and afflict him, he was calmly deliberate, reflective, and argumentative. In his interviews with his disciples, in his conversations with publicans and sinners, in his controversies with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and on all similar occasions, it is very evident, that he acted not by passion, but by sober judgment; not by impulses but in a truly reflective and rational manner; meeting argument with argument; opposing scripture to scripture as one who knew how to wield the "sword of the Spirit;" and subverting sophistry with the well considered and appropriate responses of truth.

It is true, that his illustrations and manner varied with the circumstances and the occasion, and that he was at certain times more animated, pointed, and severe than at others; but he never did or said anything, which was at variance with sound judgment. I have sometimes thought, that persons of flighty conceptions and vigorous enthusiasm would regard the Savior, if he were now on the earth, as too calm and gentle, as too thoughtful and intellectual, as too free from impulsive and excited agitations, to be reckoned with those, who are often considered the most advanced in religion. He never performed the feat of Simeon Stylites, who, from mistaken religious motives, spent years on the top of a pillar of stone; nor was he violently whirled round like a top; nor did he experience the other bodily and convulsive agitations, which

in some instances have characterized the religious movements of modern times, and have sometimes been mistaken for religion itself. In violation of the proud anticipations of the Jews, and in conformity with what might be expected from a being endued with the highest rationality, he appeared as a plain, unobtrusive, and reflective man; coming and acting like the "kingdom of God" itself, essentially "without observation;" and attracting notice, so far as he did so, by pure and sober piety only, by the beauty of virtue sustained and characterized by the strength of deliberation and wisdom, and not by being the subject or the agent of eccentricities.

In making these remarks we do not mean to imply, that the Savior was without feeling. His sympathy with the sick and the poor, his personal attachments, his earnest desire for the salvation of sinners, his denunciations of hardened transgressors, all show, that he was susceptible of deep feeling. But what we mean to say is, that he did not undervalue knowledge and truth. But on the contrary, he estimated them highly, and under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, made them, as it were, the basis of the inward life. And I think we may properly add here, as in accordance with what has been said, that no feeling, that no contrition or sorrow, and no other form of feeling whatever, does, or can possess any religious value in the sight of God, except so far as it has its origin in perception and knowledge.

(IV.)—Passing now from what may be deemed

his natural, to his purely religious traits, we remark, in the fourth place, that the life of the Savior was characterized by the spirit of ENTIRE CONSECRATION. The idea of consecration seems to be much the same with that of self-renunciation; with this difference only, that he, who is the subject of consecration, has not only renounced himself, but has done it in favor of some other object, or some other being. Accordingly he, who, in renouncing himself, has renounced all his own private desires, purposes, and aims, and has surrendered his will, which, in some sense, constitutes *himself*, into the keeping of the divine will, is emphatically a person consecrated to the divine will; or what is the same thing, he is a person consecrated to God. Now it is very evident, that the Savior, considered in his humanity, and as a messenger of God here in the world, had no will of his own. If he cannot be said, properly speaking, to have renounced his will, it is because he never possessed a will, which operated at variance with the infinite and divine will. It was not on his own account, that he came into the world. "Wist ye not" he says on a certain occasion, "that I must be about my *Father's* business?" "I came down from heaven," he says in another place, "not to do mine own will, but the will of Him, that sent me." John, 6: 38. And again he says, "my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 4: 34. There are many other passages of a similar import. And the whole history of his life, which is unstained by any selfish and personal purpose, con-

stitutes a confirmation of them. He could say, "I and my Father are one," because his whole soul lay, as it were, upon the divine altar; set apart both to do and to suffer his Father's will, "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "slain from the foundation of the world," "offered up to bear the sins of many."

It it is the same spirit of devout and entire consecration, which is the abiding and in its results the victorious element of the religious life in all his followers. And it is so, because, by the alienation of self, it puts them in a situation, where they can take hold of the divine power by faith. Those, who have made such consecration, feel that they have no longer any thing, which they can call their own. In every thing, which concerns their personal desires and interests; in every thing, which is at variance with the divine purposes, they are nailed to the Cross. And hence, in the want of all things in themselves, they have the possession of all things in God.

(V)—Again, the Savior, considered as a man, lived by SIMPLE FAITH.—A life of faith is almost necessarily implied in a state of entire self-renunciation. It does not easily appear, how a person, who, in the spirit of self-renunciation, has placed himself in the hands and under the direction of another, can live spiritually in any other way than by means of faith. There is nothing left him but simple trust. To renounce ourselves entirely and not to repose trust in another, would soon be followed by a state of despair. So that we may re-

gard it as the natural order of religious sequence, that the principle of faith, which is life in another, should take the place of the extinct principle of life in ourselves. The memorable statement, therefore, that "the just shall live by faith," was as applicable to the Savior, as to any other holy being. The whole history of the intercourse, which took place in his state of humiliation between him and his Father, is a confirmation of this position, and declares emphatically, that he NEVER DOUBTED. "Man shall not live by bread alone," he said to the Tempter, "*but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" He said to the Jews on a certain occasion, "I am not come of myself, but he, that sent me, is TRUE." This single expression carries with it important meaning. It was the *truth* of God, his firm and unchanging faithfulness, upon which his soul rested, as upon an everlasting rock. He assures us, that "without his Father, he could do nothing;" a declaration which seems necessarily to imply the existence of unwavering confidence in the Being, who was the present and the only source of his power. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the direction, which he gave to his disciples, he was willing to apply in its full import to himself. "Have faith in God." In his prayer at the grave of Lazarus, he said, "Father, I thank Thee, that thou hast heard me. And I KNEW [that is to say, had entire confidence, unwavering faith,] that thou hearest me always." Faith sustained him in trial as well as in duty; in the depths of affliction as well as in the active labors

of his ministry. Even in the agonies of the Cross, when every possible sorrow was inflicted, and every other consolation was taken away, he was supported by its mighty power alone.

And in connection with this view, we are not to be surprised that we find the Savior so often and so earnestly urging upon his followers the necessity of living in the same manner. He taught them, in various ways and at various times, that faith was the source of their inward life and power; and that by it they could overcome all difficulties, "removing even mountains." Discountenancing every other mode of living, he decidedly rebuked the disposition, originating in unbelief, to seek a *sign*, (that is to say, a striking and confirmatory manifestation of some kind,) in addition to and in support of the simple declaration of God. "An *evil* and *adulterous* generation," he says, "seeketh after a sign."

(VI.)—We proceed to observe, in the sixth place, that the Savior was a man of PRAYER.——We have already had occasion to notice his declaration, that "without his Father he could do nothing." And as if in practical recognition and manifestation of his entire personal dependence, we find him often kneeling in supplication, and drawing divine strength from the Everlasting Fountain. As God, he had all power. As man, (the aspect in which we are now contemplating him,) he had no power, which he did not receive from his heavenly Father. And if there was ever any instance of "living by the moment," (which seems to us the true way of

Christian living, and which obviously implies *praying by the moment,*)we find it undoubtedly in the life of Jesus Christ. He may be said, therefore, with a great deal of truth, to have been praying all the time. Certainly he was always in the spirit of prayer. But, besides this spirit of continual intercourse with God, which was as natural to him as the breath which he breathed, he had especial seasons of supplication, when he went apart from men, and poured forth his soul in private.

"Cold mountains and the midnight air,
"Witnessed the fervor of his prayer."

If even the Savior could do nothing without his Father, if prayer was as necessary to his spiritual support, as the very air he breathed was to the support of his body, let no one suppose, that he can sustain the grace of a truly regenerated and sanctified heart, without possessing a like prayerful spirit.

(VII.)—Our next remark is this. The Savior was conscientious and strictly faithful in whatever his Father committed into his hands to do. He lived for others. And in living for others, he made no secret reservation, that he would in some things consult his own interest. In the language of Scripture, "HE PLEASED NOT HIMSELF." In the various companies, in which he mingled, he never forgot the great mission on which he came. He was a man of labor, as well as of faith; and showed in his whole life, that action is the result of believing. It has been remarked of him, that, if he had not had something to say to Simon, he probably would

not have been found seated at Simon's table; and that "there is not an instance of his having sat at meat with sinners, without reproving their iniquities; or sharing the hospitality of unbelievers, without forcing them to listen to his words." He felt it his duty to leave nothing undone, which ought to be done. And he did it deliberately, thoroughly, unremittingly. His whole being, in all its innate power and all its outward efforts, was devoted to the one great work of doing his Father's will. No personal inconvenience, no opposition and threats of men, no pressure of personal and temporary interest, nor any other obstacles of whatever nature, had the effect to deter him from doing his duty and his whole duty to God and to men. "I find it impossible," says David Brainerd, "to enjoy peace and tranquillity of mind, without a careful improvement of time. This is really an imitation of God and Christ Jesus. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' says our Lord. If we would be like God, we must see that we fill up our time for him."

(VIII.)—We observe, in the eighth place, although the Savior was faithful and diligent in the work committed to his hands, he was not prematurely zealous and obtrusive. He realized, that every thing, when done in accordance with the will of his heavenly Father, (a will which can never be at variance with the highest rationality,) must necessarily have its right time and place. In repeated instances, when something was proposed to him to be done, he declined acting in the case,

on the ground that the proper occasion of action had not yet arrived. "His hour had not yet come." He felt, that he must act in accordance with the will of his heavenly Father, not only in the thing to be done; but also in the TIME and MANNER of doing it. Although, considered as a mere man, he possessed powers of judgment vastly greater than fall to the lot of ordinary men, and enjoyed also the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit "without measure;" he, nevertheless, felt it to be consistent with the highest duty, to nourish his powers and virtues in retirement, and not to bear his message, important and urgent as it was, prematurely to the world.

"Of the three and thirty years," says a certain writer, "which our blessed Redeemer spent on earth, thirty were spent in the obscurity and abjection of a private and humble condition. Notwithstanding the zeal for the glory of his Father, and the salvation of men, which consumed his soul; notwithstanding the tide of disorder which overran the world, and the abomination of sin and scandal which pierced his heart, the eternal incarnate Wisdom was silent, was hidden, and so remained until the hour appointed by his Father had come; repulsing, even with apparent severity, the prayer of his mother according to the flesh, because it seemed to urge his anticipating that hour." *

This trait in the Savior's character is, in a practical view, very important. It is probably through a disregard, in part at least, of the course taken by

* Interior Peace of Pere Lombez, p. 329.

the Savior, which has now been mentioned, that we find, in all denominations of Christians, melancholy instances of persons, who are young in the Christian life, or who are prompted by an undue confidence, exhibiting a disposition to enter prematurely, and sometimes violently, upon measures, which are at variance with the results of former experience and with the admonitions of ancient piety. All mistakes and erroneous proceedings of this kind are discountenanced by the example of our Savior, who quietly remained in solitude and silence, and was refreshed and strengthened with the interior dews of heavenly knowledge, till the great hour arrived, appointed in the wisdom of his heavenly Father, which called him forth to the ministry and the Cross.

(IX.)—In another particular also, is the Savior's character deserving of our notice. He exhibited, in his daily deportment, a very meek, humble, and quiet disposition of mind. Every attentive reader of the Gospels will recollect, that this interesting and beautiful trait shows itself in his personal history, in a very remarkable manner. He said of himself, "I am meek and lowly of heart." In the language of the Apostle Peter, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him, who judgeth righteously." It was said of him prophetically, and before his advent into the world, "He was oppressed and afflicted; *yet he opened not his mouth.*" Isa. 53; 7. And again in the same Prophet, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause

his voice to be heard in the streets." Isa. 42; 3. At a certain time, when there was a disposition among some of his disciples to put forth personal pretensions, and to claim the preeminence over others, he remarked to them. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give up his life a ransom for many." Mat. 20: 28. But it is hardly necessary to make particular references, when his whole life, in all the varieties of its situation, was a beautiful illustration of this divine trait. He had compassion upon the ignorant; he made his dwelling with the poor; he travelled on foot from place to place in weariness and sorrow; he sat at meat with publicans and sinners; he washed the feet of his disciples. In the possession of the inestimable trait of meekness and quietness of spirit, let all, who seek the highest degree of purification and sanctification of heart, be imitators of the example of Jesus Christ; who, in the language of the Apostle Paul, "made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant." Philip. 2: 7. Whatever pretensions any of us might justly put forth as natural men or as men of the world, or, in other words, whatever we might justly claim from the world on the world's principles, we should, nevertheless, be willing, in imitation of the blessed Savior's example, to be made of no reputation, and to become the servants of our brethren.

(X.)—We do not propose to extend these remarks on this interesting subject. In conclusion,

however, we would observe, that the life of the Savior, whether considered, inwardly or outwardly, was characterized by a proportionate fitness or symmetry in all its parts. It cannot be said of the Savior, as he existed in his humanity, that he was a mere combination of peculiarities; a man wonderful, not by the excellencies, but by the eccentricities of his nature; exciting attention merely by his strange unlikeness to every thing, which could properly be expected in a man. On the contrary, every thing was perfect and appropriate in its position, as well as perfect in its own nature. All the remarkable qualities, which as separate elements contributed to the constitution of his perfect character, were blended together in beautiful harmony. He stands before us complete in the adaptation of the parts of his character, as well as complete in the parts themselves; complete, therefore, as a whole and generically, as well as complete separately and specifically. As nothing can be added to the amount of his excellencies; so it does not appear, that any thing can be improved in their relative adjustment, in their beautiful and perfect proportion. This is the man Christ Jesus, who is set before us as an example: who "was tempted in all points as we are, and yet without sin."

(1.)—In view of what has been said, a few remarks may properly be made. And the first is, that the life of Christ, or rather the religious life as manifested in Christ, is entirely different in its character from the life of nature. In the life of

nature, which is unprotected and unrestrained by the conservative principle of supreme love to God, every thing runs to excess. That, which is good in itself, becomes vitiated in its inordinate action. Sympathy assumes the shape of querulous weakness. Friendships are stimulated by a secret selfish influence, till they become idolatry. The love of knowledge distorts itself into obstinacy of opinion and pride of intellect. An allowable and holy displeasure degenerates into the violence of natural anger and revenge. Even a desire to do good is often perverted, through a selfish impetuosity, by an injurious and fatal disregard to the proprieties of time, person, and place.

In those who are but partially sanctified, as well as in those who are wholly dead in their sins, the natural life, in itself considered and just so far as it has an existence at all, is always weak, selfish, inconsistent, passionate, changeable.

The life of Christ in the soul, or what is the same thing, the life of the soul modelled after the image of Christ, is entirely different. Its sympathy is restrained and regulated by the suggestions of reason. Its personal friendships are rendered pure by the exclusion of all idolatrous regard. Its love is unstained by selfishness; and its indignation is hallowed by love. In the natural life, every thing is vitiated either by excess or defect. In the life of Christ, every thing is correspondent to the truth of reason and the commandment of God.

(2.)—In particular, the life of Christ in the soul

is distinguished from the natural life, in being characterized by great SIMPLICITY.—It is a common idea, that those, who have been the subjects of the interior transformation, have experienced something, which is very remarkable. And undoubtedly it is so. There is truth in the idea; but probably not in the sense, in which the world understand the term. The coming of Christ in the soul is remarkable, in the same sense in which the manner of Christ's entrance into the world was remarkable. It was certainly remarkable, that the Son of God, the "express image of the Father," should become the "babe of Bethlehem," the child of the humble Mary. And thus the new spiritual life when it exists in truth, is not the offspring of earthly royalty, that is heralded by the huzzas of the multitude, but rather the "infant in the manger," that is born in obscurity, and is known and honored only by the lowly in heart. It is a life, so far from any thing that is calculated to attract attention in the worldly sense, that it is known and characterized in no one particular more than by what we have denominated its *simplicity*; by its being in the language of the Savior like a "little child;" by its freedom from ostentation and noisy pretension; by its inward nothingness.

(3.)—Another and the only remaining remark is this. It is evident, that the life of Christ, when examined in its elements, was sustained on the two great principles, which have been so often mentioned, viz. of *entire consecration and of perfect faith.* It is very true, that these two principles, as

we have already seen, did not constitute the whole of his inward life; but it cannot be doubted, that they formed the essential basis of it. They were its fundamental elements; the strong pillars on which it rested. In other words, the Savior, in the true spirit of consecration, appeared in the world, not for himself and his own pleasure, but for the simple purpose of doing and suffering the will of his heavenly Father. And, in the fulfilment of this object, he lived, as all his followers ought to live, by the sublime principle of faith, and not by the inferior guidance of open vision. So that his life, to express its great outlines in a single word, was a life united to God by its disruption from every thing else. Or in still other expressions, it was a life so united to God, that it saw, knew, and loved every thing else, including himself, in its relation to the Divine Mind; IN and FOR God, and God ALONE. Happy are they, the features of whose inward existence are framed and fashioned upon this divine model.

We do not doubt, that the inward religious experience in different individuals may receive some modification, more or less, from the natural character. It will appear differently in John the Baptist and John the Disciple; it will appear differently in Stephen, in Peter, in Paul. But the difference will exist in the modifications and not in the essence of the thing; in that, which is outward and incidental, rather than in that, which is internal and substantial. But in all cases of true holiness without exception, there must be, and there

is the image of Christ at the bottom. In all cases in which the work of God is carried to its completion, the soul has become an "Infant Jesus;" and like its prototype, the Jesus of Nazareth and the Cross, it will grow in "wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and with man."

Such Christians and such Christianity will have an effect upon the world. Those, who are formed upon this divine model, not only have a noble lineage; but they bear in themselves the impress and the inscription of a true nobility. They are the tree, mentioned by the Psalmist, which is "planted by the rivers of water;" not stinted and dwarfish, as too many are, who bear the name of Christ; not smitten with rust and eaten with the worm, but sound alike in the body, the blossom, and the fruit; not crooked, knotted, and unsymmetrical, but free, expansive, and proportional. Wherever they go, the world recognizes their character, without the requisite of a formal proclamation. The image of Jesus, the divinity of the heart, is so written upon the whole outward life, that they are an "epistle, known and read of all men."

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

On the true idea of Spiritual Liberty.

It has probably come within the observation of many persons, that there is a form or modification of religious experience, which is denominated "Liberty." Hence, in common religious parlance, it is not unfrequently the case that we hear of persons being "in the liberty;" or in the "true liberty." These expressions, undoubtedly, indicate an important religious truth, which has not altogether escaped the notice of writers on the religious life. The account, which is given by Francis de Sales of "liberty of spirit," is, that "*it consists in keeping the heart totally disengaged from every created thing, in order that it may follow the known will of God.*"

To this statement of De Sales, considered as a general and somewhat indefinite statement, we do not find it necessary to object. Certain it is that he, who is in the "true liberty," is "disengaged," and has escaped from the enslaving influence of the world. God has become to him an inward operative principle; without whom he feels he can do nothing; and in connection with whose blessed assistance he has an inward consciousness, that the

world and its lusts have lost their enthralling power. Liberty, considered in this general sense of the term, is to be regarded as expressive of one of the highest and most excellent forms of Christian experience. And we may add further, that none truly enjoy it in this high sense but those who are in a state of mind, which may with propriety be denominated sanctification; none but those whom God has made "free indeed." We proceed now to mention some of the marks, by which the condition or state of true spiritual liberty is characterized. Nor does there seem to be much difficulty in doing this, because liberty is the opposite of enthralment; and because it is easy, as a general thing, to understand and to specify the things, by which we are most apt to be enthralled.

First.—The person, who is in the enjoyment of true spiritual liberty, is no longer enthralled to the lower or appetitive part of his nature. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever other appetite may claim its appropriate exercise, he can say in truth, that he does all to the glory of God. It is to be lamented, but is, nevertheless, true, that there are many persons of a reputable Christian standing, who are subject, in a greater or less degree, to a very injurious tyranny from this source. But this is not the case with those, who are in the possession of inward liberty. Their souls have entered into the pleasures of divine rest. And they can truly say they are dead to all appetites, except so far as they operate to fulfil the original and wise intentions of the Being who implanted them.

Second.—The person, who is in the enjoyment of true spiritual liberty, is no longer enthralled by certain desires of a higher character than the appetites; such as the desire of society, the desire of knowledge, the desire of the world's esteem, and the like. These principles, which, in order to distinguish them from the appetites, may conveniently be designated as the propensities or propensive principles, operate in the man of true inward liberty as they were designed to operate, but never with the power to enslave. He desires, for instance, to go into society, and, in compliance with the suggestions of the social principle, to spend a portion of time in social intercourse; but he finds it entirely easy, although the desire, in itself considered, may be somewhat marked and strong, to keep it in strict subordination to his great purpose of doing every thing for the glory of God. Or perhaps, under the influence of another propensive tendency, that of the principle of curiosity, he desires to read a book of much interest, which some individual has placed before him; but he finds it entirely within his power, as in the other case, to check his desire, and to keep it in its proper place. In neither of these instances, nor in others like them, is he borne down, as we often perceive to be the case, by an almost uncontrollable tendency of mind. The desire, as soon as it begins to exist, is at once brought to the true test. The question at once arises, Is the desire of spending my time in this way conformable to the will of God? And if it is found or suspected to be at variance with the

divine will, it is dismissed at once. The mind is conscious of an inward strength, which enables it to set at defiance all enslaving tendencies of this nature.

Third.—A man, who is in the enjoyment of true religious liberty, will not be enthralled by inordinate domestic or patriotic affections, however ennobling they may be thought to be; such as the love of parents and children, the love of friends and country. It is true that spiritual liberty does not exclude the exercise of these affections, which are in many respects generous and elevated, any more than it condemns and excludes the existence and exercise of the lower appetites and propensities. It pronounces its condemnation and exclusion upon a certain degree of them, or a certain intensity of power. When they are so strong as to become perplexities and entanglements in the path of duty, then they are evidently inconsistent with the existence of true spiritual freedom; and in that shape and in that degree necessarily come under condemnation. I have, for instance, a very near and dear friend, who is exceedingly worthy of my affections; but if my love to him leads me, perhaps almost involuntarily, to seek his company, when my duty to my God and my fellow-men calls me in another direction; and if I find it difficult to subdue and regulate this disposition of mind, it is evident that I am not in the purest and highest state of internal liberty. I have wrongly given to a creature something which belongs to God alone.

Fourth.—When we are wrongly under the in-

fluence of disinclinations and aversions, we cannot be said to be in internal liberty. Sometimes, when God very obviously calls us to the discharge of duty, we are internally conscious of a great degree of backwardness. We do it, it is true; but we feel that we do not like to do it. There are certain duties, which we owe to the poor and degraded, to the openly profane and impure, which are oftentimes repugnant to persons of certain refined mental habits; but if we find that these refined repugnancies, which come in the way of duty, have great power over us, we are not in the true liberty. We have not that strength in God, which enables us to act vigorously and freely. Sometimes we have an aversion to an individual, the origin of which we cannot easily account for; there is something unpleasant to us, and perhaps unreasonably so, in his countenance, his manners, or his person. If this aversion interferes with and prevents the prompt and full discharge of the duty which, as a friend and a Christian, we owe to him, then we have reason to think that we have not reached that state of holy and unrestrained flexibility of mind, which the true idea of spiritual liberty implies.

Fifth.—The person is not in the enjoyment of true liberty of spirit, who is wanting in the disposition of accommodation to others in things, which are not of especial importance. And this is the case when we needlessly insist upon having every thing done in our own time and manner; when we are troubled about little things, which are in themselves indifferent, and think, perhaps, more of the

position of a chair than of the salvation of a soul; when we find a difficulty in making allowance for the constitutional differences in others, which it may not be either easy or important for them to correct; when we find ourselves disgusted because another does not express himself in entire accordance with our principles of taste; or when we are displeased and dissatisfied with his religious or other performances, although we know he does the best he can. All these things, and many others like them, give evidence of a mind that has not entered into the broad and untramelled domain of spiritual freedom.

We may properly add here, that the fault-finder is not a man of a free spirit. Accordingly, those who are often complaining of their minister, of the brethren of the church, of the time and manner of the ordinances, and of many other persons and things, will find, on a careful examination, that they are too full of self, too strongly moved by their personal views and interests, to know any thing of that ennobling liberty, which the Savior gives to his truly sanctified ones.

Sixth.—The person, who is disturbed and impatient when events fall out differently from what he expected and anticipated, is not in the enjoyment of true spiritual freedom. In accordance with the great idea of God's perfect sovereignty, the man of a religiously free spirit regards all events which take place, SIN ONLY EXCEPTED, as an expression, under the existing circumstances, of the will of God. And such is his unity with the divine will, that

there is an immediate acquiescence in the event, whatever may be its nature, and however afflicting in its personal bearings. His mind has acquired, as it were, a divine flexibility, in virtue of which it accommodates itself with surprising ease and readiness to all the developments of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse.

Seventh.—Those, who are in the enjoyment of true liberty, are patient under interior temptations and all inward trials of mind. They can bless the hand, that smites them internally as well as externally. Knowing that all good exercises are from the Holy Spirit, they have no disposition to prescribe to God what the particular nature of those exercises shall be. If God sees fit to try and to strengthen their spirit of submission and patience by bringing them into a state of great heaviness and sorrow, either by subjecting them to severe temptations from the adversary of souls, or by laying upon them the burden of deep grief for an impenitent world, or in any other way, they feel it to be all right and well. They ask for their daily bread spiritually, as well as temporally; and they cheerfully receive what God sees fit to send them.

Eighth.—The person, who enjoys true liberty of spirit, is the most deliberate and cautious in doing what he is most desirous to do. This arises from the fact, that he is very much afraid of being out of the line of God's will and order. He distrusts and examines closely all strong desires and strong feelings generally, especially if they agitate his mind and render it somewhat uncontrollable,

Not merely or chiefly because the feelings are strong; that is not the reason; but because there is reason to fear, from the very fact of their strength and agitating tendency, that some of nature's fire, which true sanctification quenches and destroys, has mingled in with the holy and peaceable flame of divine love. John the Baptist, no doubt, had a strong natural desire to be near Jesus Christ while he was here on earth, to hear his divine words, to enjoy personally his company; but in the ennobling liberty of spirit which the Holy Ghost gave him, he was enabled to overrule and suppress this desire, and to remain alone in the solitary places of the wilderness.

NINTH.—The possessor of true religious liberty, when he has submissively and conscientiously done his duty, is not troubled by any undue anxiety in relation to the result. It may be laid down as a maxim, that he, who asserts that he has left all things in the hands of God, and at the same time exhibits trouble and agitation of spirit in relation to the results of those very things, (with the exception of those agitated movements or disquietudes, which are purely *instinctive*,) gives abundant evidence, in the fact of this agitation of spirit, that he has not really made the entire surrender, which he professes to have made. The alledged facts are contradictory of each other, and both cannot exist at the same time.

TENTH.—The person of a truly liberated spirit, although he is ever ready to do his duty, waits patiently till the proper time of action. He has no

choice of time but that which is indicated by the providence of God. The Savior himself could not act, until his "hour was come." When he was young, he was subject to his parents; when he was older, he taught in the Synagogues. In his journeyings, in his miracles, in his instructions, in his sufferings, he always had an acquiescent and approving reference to that providential order of events, which his heavenly Father had established. On the contrary, an enthralled mind, although it is religiously disposed in part, will frequently adopt a precipitate and undeliberate course of action, which is inconsistent with a humble love of the divine order. Such a person thinks that freedom consists in having things in his own way, whereas true freedom consists in having things in the right way; and the right way is God's way. And in this remark we include not only the thing to be done, and the manner of doing it, but also the time of doing it.

FINALLY.—In view of what has been said, and as a sort of summary of the whole, we may remark that true liberty of spirit is found in those, and in those only, who, in the language of De Sales, "keep the heart totally disengaged from every created thing, in order that they may follow the known will of God." In other words, it is found with those who can say, with the Apostle Paul, that they are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." The ruling motive in the breast of the man of a religiously free spirit is, that he may in all cases and on all occasions, do the will

of God. In that will his "life is hid." The supremacy of the divine will, in other words, the reign of God in the heart, necessarily has a direct and powerful operation upon the appetites, propensities, and affections; keeping them, each and all, in their proper place. As God rules in the heart, every thing else is necessarily subordinate. It is said of the Savior himself that "he pleased not himself," but that he came "to do his Father's will."

Another thing, which can be said affirmatively and positively is, that those, who are spiritually free, are led by the Spirit of God. A man, who is really guided by his appetites, his propensities, his affections, his love of country, or any thing else other than the Spirit of God, cannot be said to be led by that divine Spirit. The Spirit of God, ruling in the heart, will not bear the presence of any rival, any competitor. In the heart of true liberty the Spirit of God rules, and rules alone: so that he, who is in the possession of this liberty, does nothing of his own pleasure or his own choice. That is to say, in all cases of voluntary action, he does nothing under the impulse and guidance of natural pleasure or natural choice alone. His liberty consists in being free from self; in being liberated from the dominion of the world; in lying quietly and submissively in the hands of God; in leaving himself, like clay in the hands of the potter, to be moulded and fashioned by the divine will. Natural liberty may be said to consist in following the natural sentiments; in doing our own

desires and purposes, which naturally throng in upon the soul and take possession. It is like a strong man, that is under the complete control of his irregular passions. Spiritual liberty consists in passively, yet intelligently and approvingly, following the leadings of the Holy Ghost. It is like a little child, that reposes in simplicity and in perfect confidence on the bosom of its beloved mother. Natural liberty combines, with the appearance of liberty, the reality of subjection. He, who has but natural liberty, is a slave to himself. In spiritual liberty it is just the opposite. He, who is spiritually free, has entire dominion over himself. Spiritual liberty implies, with the fact of entire submission to God, the great and precious reality of interior emancipation. He, who is spiritually free, is free in God. And he may, perhaps, be said to be free in the same sense in which God is; who is free to do every thing right and nothing wrong.

This is freedom indeed. This is the liberty, with which Christ makes free. This is emancipation, which inspires the songs of angels; a freedom, which earth cannot purchase, and which hell cannot shackle.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

On the state of Inward Recollection.

I BELIEVE it is the case, that all those, who have had much experience in the principles and methods of interior living, agree in attaching a very great importance to the state of INWARD RECOLLECTION. It is certainly difficult to meet the crosses and trials of life with composure, and to sustain the soul on other occasions, in purity and peace, without the aid of inwardly recollected habits of mind. However sincere may be our desire for entire devotedness of heart, and whatever resolutions we may form with that view, we shall often find ourselves in confusion of spirit and inadvertently failing in the fulfilment of our own resolutions, without this important aid.

INWARD RECOLLECTION is that serious and collected state of mind, in which God is realized and felt as the inward and present counsellor, guide, and judge of all our actions, both internal and external. In its results, when it becomes the fixed habit of the soul, it not only restores God to the inward possession and establishes Him upon the throne of the intellect and heart; but differing from that

condition, in which He comes in broken and fragmentary visits, it sustains Him there essentially without interruption, in what may be termed a continuance or perpetuity of presence. In a word, it is the devoutly and practically realized presence of God in the soul, moment by moment. This is the state of mind, which, we cannot hesitate in saying, all Christians ought to be in. It is hardly necessary to say, that it is a scriptural state of mind. It is obviously implied and taught in those numerous passages of Scripture, which inculcate the duty of watchfulness, which speak of setting the Lord always before us, of walking with God, and of our inability to do any thing without him. And it is not more agreeable to God's Word, than it is suited to man's condition; not more scriptural, than it is necessary. We need it, in order to know what to do. We need it, in order to do what is proper and necessary to be done, in a just, Christian, and holy manner. We need it in all times and places, and in small things as well as great; since there are no times and places, from which God ought to be excluded; and nothing is so small, that it may not have great and important relations.

It will be objected perhaps, that the state of Inward Recollection, considered as a state of long continuance and still more as perpetual, is an impracticable one. Whatever it may be to others, (and undoubtedly it is a state of mind, which is never experienced either in the absence of religion or in a low state of religion,) it is certainly not impracticable to a person of a truly devout spirit.

But how can it be possible, says the objector, inasmuch as the religious life is made up, in a great degree, of specific religious duties, that a person can give the attention of his mind to those duties, and be occupied with the distinct idea of God at the same time? The difficulty, which is implied in this objection, whatever may be its reality or its extent, is met and obviated, at least for all practical purposes, by an acknowledged law of our mental nature. We refer to the principle or law of Habit. By means of this law the rapidity of the mental action may be increased to a degree, almost inconceivable; so much so that actions, which are distinct in time, will appear to be simultaneous; and objects, which are separately attended to, will appear to be embraced in one mental view. And so far as all practical purposes are concerned, the acts of the mind, which thus separatately and successively take place, may be truly regarded as one act. And applying this law to the state of inward recollection, we may easily see, how the mind may be occupied with a specific duty and may at the same time be percipient of the divine presence, and may also connect the two together and impart to them a character of unity, so that the duty may properly be said to be done in a religiously recollected state. The movement of the mind in relation to the duty, and then in relation to God as cognizant of the duty, and the transition from one to the other, are all so exceedingly rapid, that memory does not ordinarily separate and recognize them as distinct acts; and thus in our ap-

prehension and consciousness of them, they are blended together as one. God, therefore, in our mental contemplation of him, may be made present to all our specific duties; and thus the essential condition is fulfilled, which enables the mind to exist in the state of inward recollection. It is our privilege, therefore, a privilege too often undervalued and neglected, to do every thing which Christian duty requires, as in the divine presence, IN God and FOR God. We proceed now to specify some of those antecedent conditions or tendencies of mind, which may properly be regarded as preparatory, and even indispensable, to the state of Inward Recollection.

(I.)—In the first place, there must be a sincere and earnest desire to possess it. This eminent grace, without which the kingdom of God in the soul will be liable to constant irruptions and overthrows, will never be possessed by a heart, that is indifferent to its possession. It can belong to those and those only, who with a sincere disposition to seek God in all things, can be truly said to "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

(II.)—In the second place, in order to possess recollection of spirit, it will be necessary not to be involved, to an undue extent, in the perplexities of worldly business. There is such a thing as admitting so much of the world and its cares into the mind, as to crowd out the great idea of God. Indeed, this is often done. And thus men, and some of them too, who occasionally observe the formalities of religion, become practical atheists. I notice,

in reading the religious writings of Antonia Bourignon, that she expresses her opinion to one of her correspondents, that God had sent a certain affliction upon him, in order to bring him to the state of mind, which we are now considering. "The multitude of your comings and goings," she remarks among other things, "and other agitations of body do, without doubt, disturb the INWARD RECOLLECTION. It is impossible to converse purely with God, [that is to say, when we permit them to have their natural effect upon us,] in the midst of external agitations." And again she says, in writing to another person, "if you could but proceed in this affair, keeping your spirit *recollected* in God, I doubt not but it would succeed to his glory and our great good. I speak always of this RECOLLECTION; because I myself *can do nothing out of it.* God's spirit is a well regulated, orderly spirit, which proceeds with temperance, and weight, and measure, and discretion, *without any manner of precipitation.*" *

(III.)—In the third place, in order to possess inward recollection, we are to have nothing to do, *as a general rule*, in thought or in feeling, or in any other way, with any thing but the present moment, and its natural and necessary relations. Discursive thoughts of a flighty and purely imaginative character, either going back to the past, for the mere purpose of drawing pleasure from it, or prospective and anticipative of the future in the manner of an idle man's reverie, are great hindran-

* Bourignon's Light in Darkness, pp. 12, 132.

ces to a recollected state. We are, in that way, rather pleasing ourselves than God; and the divine presence cannot well be secured at such times. In other words, as a general rule, there must be before us some present object. And that object must be regarded by us particularly in its moral aspect and relations. The present moment, is necessarily, to a certain extent, a declaration of the divine will; and furnishes the basis of present duty. And it is the duty of the present moment, considered in its moral extension, to which, and to which only, God will consent to be a party.

(IV.)—It may be added further, that the state of mind, which we are considering, will not be likely to be possessed without great fixedness of purpose; a holy inflexibility of will, which keeps the mind steady to its object. We must not only wish to be the Lord's in this matter; but *resolve* to be so. It is well understood, that even worldly objects, restricted as they are in compass and importance, cannot, in general, be satisfactorily accomplished by an unfixed and vacillating mind. And still less can the vast objects of religion. I know, if the great object of interior recollection is proposed to be secured by the mere labor of the will alone, without the cooperation of the affections, it will be hard work, and useless work too. And on the other hand a favorable posture of the affections will be of but little avail, unless the desires and inclinations are aided by the superadded energy of a fixed determination. But when the decisive and uncompromising act of the will combines

its influence with that of the aspirations of the heart, the most favorable results may, with the grace of God, be reasonably expected. It is true, without the grace of God, nothing can be done, whatever may be the applications and discipline of the mind. But when the conditions, which have been mentioned, are fulfilled, the divine assistance, if we may rely upon the promises, can never be wanting.

(1.)—It has already been intimated, that the state of mind, to which our attention has been directed, is one of great practical importance, And we proceed, therefore, to observe now, that one of the benefits connected with the state of inward recollection is, that it is favorable to the best improvement of time. It will be a matter of course, that the person, who lives in religious recollection, will avoid unnecessary employments. With the idea of God, and perhaps we may add with the reality of God, continually present in his heart, scrutinizing every motive and action, and continually enforcing the claims of moral obligation, he will find no time to be spent idly, nor for the mere purposes of pleasure. Nor can he under such circumstances be the subject of internal dissipation; of vain and wandering imaginations and reveries; but will be enabled, to a degree unknown before, to bring every thought as well as every feeling, into subjection.—In order to prevent misapprehension, it may properly be added here, that whatever recreation of body or mind, either by social intercourse or in any other way, is really required by

the physical and mental constitution and laws, is entirely consistent with duty and with inward recollection. A remark, however, which requires, in its practical application, no small share of wisdom.

(2.)—Again, the state of inward recollection tends to diminish greatly the occasions of temptation. It is very obvious, that he, who knows nothing but his present duty in itself and in its relations, which is all that it is necessary for him to know, cannot be so much exposed in this respect, as other persons. Unspeakable dangers must, of necessity, beset the mind, which is full of worldly activity, and which is continually discursive; running upon errands where it is not called; curiously and unnecessarily speculative; prying, oftentimes with microscopic minuteness, into the concerns of others, not only without reason but against reason. What a flood of tempting thoughts must flow out upon these various occasions, and throng around the mind! What suggestions, which Satan knows well when and where to apply, to envy, distrust, anger, pride, worldly pleasure, ambition; none of which probably would have approached the mind, that remained recollected in God.

(3.)—Another remark is, that Inward Recollection helps us to know the truth, especially moral truth. The supreme desire of him who has fully given his heart to God, is, not merely that he may be happy and thus please himself, but that he may KNOW and DO God's will. Knowledge, therefore, (we do not mean all kinds of knowledge, but par-

ticularly that which has relation to the divine will,) is obviously of the greatest consequence. And those will know most, who are the most recollected. The truth opens itself to the mind, that faithfully perseveres in the state of inward recollection, with remarkable clearness. And the reason, in part, is, because the mind, in a religiously recollected state, ceases to be agitated by the passions. "The light of God," says the writer already referred to, "shines as the sun at noon day; but our passions, like so many thick clouds opposed to it, are the reason that we cannot perceive it. Love, hatred, fear, hope, grief, joy, and other vicious passions filling our soul, blind it in such a manner that it sees nothing but what is sensible and suitable to it; *refusing all that is contrary to its own inclinations*; and being thus filled with itself, it is not capable of receiving the light of God."* Now there can be no question, that Inward Recollection secures the soul, in a most remarkable degree, from inordinate passions. Such passions cannot well flourish, with the eye of God distinctly looking upon them. And accordingly, under such circumstances, the illuminative suggestions of the Holy Spirit readily enter the mind, and operate in it, and reveal the divine will. So that he, who walks in recollection, may reasonably expect to walk in the light of true knowledge and of a divine guidance.

And not only this, Inward Recollection tends to concentrate, and consequently to stengthen very much the action of the intellectual powers. It does

* Bourignon's Light in Darkness, p. 14.

this, in part, and indirectly, by disburdening the mind of those wandering thoughts and unnecessary cares and excitements, which with scarcely any exception overrun the minds of those, who do not live in a recollected state.

(4.)—Another favorable result, connected with the habit of inward recollection, is, that, by confining the mind to the present moment, and retaining God in the position of a present counsellor and guide, it prevents the exercise of reflex and selfish acts on the past, and also undue and selfish calculations for the future. Self, if we permit it, will either secretly or openly find nourishment every where; and every where, therefore, we are to fight against it, overcome it, slay it. When the past is gone and we are conscious that we have done our duty in it, if we would not have the life of self imbibing strength from that source, we must leave it with God in simplicity of spirit; and not suffer it to furnish food either for vanity or disheartening regrets. We should avoid also all undue and selfish calculations for the future, such as continually agitate and distract the minds of the people of the world; and indeed all thoughts and anticipations of a prospective character, which do not flow out of the facts and the relations of the present moment, and which are not sanctioned by a present divine inspection. "Happy is the man," says Fenelon, "who retains nothing in his mind, but what is necessary; and who only thinks of each thing just *when it is time to think of it*; so that it is rather God, who excites the perception and idea of

it, by an impression and discovery of his will which we must perform, than the mind's being at the trouble to forecast and find it."* To these important results, there can be no question, that the habit of inward recollection is exceedingly favorable.

(5.)—Again, we have good reason for supposing, that the state of mind under consideration is eminently propitious to the spirit and practice of prayer. There certainly can be no acceptable prayer without a considerable degree of recollection. And the requirement that we should "pray without ceasing," seems almost necessarily to imply, that we should always be in a recollected state. "He, who is always dissipated," says a certain writer, "like a house open to all comers and goers, is very unfit for prayer. He, that will never pray, but in the hour that calls him to it, will never do it well. But he, that would succeed in this great exercise, ought, by continual recollection, to keep himself always ready, and in an actual disposition for praying."†

Finally, one of the great excellencies of the state of inward recollection is, that it gives us the place of central observation and power, the key, if we may so express it, to the position of the religious life; and enables us to exercise an effective control over its whole broad extent. That is to say, it places us in the most favorable position to discover and meet the attacks of our spiritual adver-

* Fenelon's Directions for a Holy Life.

† Letter of Instruction on Christian Perfection, by Francis de la Combe.

saries, and also to render our own movements and efforts fully available. However well disposed may be our intentions, whatever good purposes we may have formed, whatever may be the formality and solemnity of our recorded resolutions, they will ever be found in a great degree useless, without this aid. It will be in vain to think of living a life of true religion, a life in which God himself is the inspiring element, without a present, permanant, and realizing sense of his presence. It is, therefore, not without a good degree of reason, that the pious Cecil has remarked, that "RECOLLECTION is the life of religion."

CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

On growth in Holiness.

If a person is holy, how can he be more holy? If he is perfectly holy how can he increase in holiness? These are questions, which are frequently asked, and which it is desirable satisfactorily to answer.

That a thing may be perfect in its nature, and yet be susceptible of growth or advancement in degree, is, I suppose, a matter of common observation. An oak, when it first rises above the surface of the ground, is so small and weak, that it may be easily trodden under foot; and yet it is as really and truly an oak, as when it subsequently stands forth in the strength and stature of an hundred years. A human being is in his nature as much a human being in the period of infancy, as in the subsequent expansion and growth of manhood. And so consider a man in relation to any intellectual power of the mind, or in relation to any appetite or affection of the mind, and the same view may very properly be taken. A person is a reasoner, for instance; he understands perfectly the principles and process of reasoning, and he

may be able to apply the principles and process perfectly in a given case; and yet under the favorable influence of the law of habit, he may much increase the promptness and facility, and consequent perfection, in the operations of this mental faculty. Again, an intemperate man may become perfectly temperate, and yet we all know the general fact, that one, who is thus entirely reformed from intemperance, is more likely to be overcome by temptation in the earlier periods of his reformation, than when subsequently the temperate principle has acquired growth and strength.

And we may not only say in general terms, that there may be a growth in perfection, but may assert further, that the thing which is most perfect, if it be susceptible of growth at all, will have the most sure and rapid growth. Which grows most and in the best manner, the flower which is whole and perfect in its incipient state, or that which has a canker in it, or is otherwise injured and defective in some of its parts? Which will grow the most rapidly and symmetrically, the child which is perfect in its infancy, or one which is afflicted with some mal-formation? Illustrations and facts of this kind seem to make it clear that the spiritually renovated state of mind, which is variously called holiness, perfect love, and sanctification, may be susceptible of growth or increase. It is not only evident that there is no natural or physical impossibility in it, but, as has been intimated, we may go farther, and lay it down as a general truth, that perfection in the *nature* of a thing is requisite

to perfection in *degree.* And accordingly, although it is possible for a person who is partially holy to grow in holiness, a person who is entirely holy, although he may be assailed by unfavorable influences outwardly, will grow much more. The obstacles to growth in holiness will not only be much less in the latter case than in the former; but that inward vitality, which is necessary to the greatest expansion and progress, will possess a positive and effective power, unknown under other circumstances.

(II.)—These views not only commend themselves to common observation and the lights of human reason, but we remark, in the second place, that they are also fully in accordance with what we are taught in the Scriptures. We learn in relation to John the Baptist, that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, and that consequently he was sanctified from that early period. But when we contemplate him in after life, in the temptations and labors he underwent, in his faithful preaching, in his stern rebukes of wickedness in high places as well as low, in his imprisonment, and in the general growth and expansion of his matured and consecrated powers, can there possibly be any difficulty in ascribing to him a growth in holiness? Does not the opposite idea, viz., that in the degree of holiness he was not more advanced than at the period of his birth, carry an absurdity upon the very face of it? And we may remark further, that it is expressly said of him, "And the child grew, and waxed STRONG IN SPIRIT." The

Savior also was holy from the very beginning of his existence. There was no one power, either of body or mind, that was not fully sanctified. But it was said of him, in terms similar to those applied to John the Baptist, Luke 2:40: "And the child grew, and WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." And again it is said of him, in the same chapter, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." What is the meaning of this increase of strength in spirit? And how could he increase in the favor of his heavenly Father, if, with the increase of his expanding powers, there was not also a corresponding growth in holy love? The Scriptures every where speak of growth. They do not recognize the idea of standing still; and all those passages, which require growth in grace and religious knowledge, are as applicable after the experience of sanctification as before. "Let us, therefore, as many as be PERFECT, be thus minded." Philip. 3:15. Be thus minded, in what respect? The answer is found in the preceding verse, viz., to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Be ye, therefore, perfect," says the Savior, "as your Father in heaven is perfect." This remarkable and most impressive command evidently implies two things. The first is, that we should be perfect in our sphere; that is to say, in our perceptions, our feelings, our purposes, and to the full extent of all our powers. And the second is, that we should continually expand, in accordance with that law of

increase which is a part of the nature of every rational being, our capacity of feeling and of knowledge, whatever it may be. And in doing this, (that is to say, on the supposition of its being done,) we fulfil the command absolutely, so far as the *nature* of our mental exercises is concerned; and fulfil it by approximation, or continual expansion and growth, so far as relates to their *degree*. It is thus with the angels in heaven. They are holy; but are always growing in holiness. In the nature of their exercises they are like their heavenly Father, and perfect as he is perfect; but in relation to the degree of their exercises, they can be said to be perfect only in availing themselves of every possible means of approximation and growth. Growth, therefore, continual advancement, is the unalterable law of all created, holy beings. And hence it is further said in the Scriptures, in expressions that are full of weighty import, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Matt. 13: 12.

(III.)—Some persons may admit the fact of growth in holiness after the experience of full sanctification, and still be in some degree of perplexity as to the *manner* of it. We proceed, therefore, in the third place, without promising to remove this perplexity altogether, to enter into some explanations upon this topic. Evangelical holiness, it will be recollected, is nothing more nor less than perfect love. Love is based, in part, upon knowledge, and is *necessarily* based upon it. It is entirely evident,

that we can never love an object of which we have no knowledge; and it is equally so, that, in proportion as our knowledge extends, we have a wider intellectual basis for the action of this principle. And accordingly every new manifestation of God's character, every new exhibition of his attributes, every additional development of his providences, will furnish new occasions for accessions of love. It is the privilege, therefore, of a person perfected in love, and consequently a holy person, to increase in holiness in exact proportion with his increase in knowledge.

Again, it is well known that there is a great law of our mental nature, termed the law of HABIT. The law is, that increased facility and strength of mental action, results from repetition or practice. There does not appear to be a power of the mind, either intellectual or sensitive, which may not feel the influence of this law. And according to this law, every exercise of love, when the exercises are continuously successive, will give place to another, which is increased in strength. And hence a holy being, (not one who is holy to day and sinning to-morrow, and so on alternately,) but a holy being, who continues to be so, will necessarily go on from one degree of strength to another. And we may add, by way of illustration, that it seems to be the same here, as it is in regard to depravity. Our theologians assure us, that man is by nature *entirely* depraved. But they also agree in asserting, that entireness of depravity does not preclude the idea of growth in depravity. They admit that the

law of habit strengthens the intensity of the depraved element. A depraved man is more depraved than a depraved child; and a depraved devil is more depraved than a depraved man. If theologians generally propound as sound doctrine the idea of growth in the matter of depravity, when the depravity is entire, it would be difficult to show its unsoundness in the matter of holiness.

And there is another important consideration. There are grounds for the remark, that we may indirectly increase the strength of holy emotions and desires, by a removal of the various obstacles which oppose and obstruct their exercise. The speed of a vessel or of a railroad car depends not only upon the amount of the propelling power, whatever that power may be, but also, in part, upon the number and greatness of the obstacles to be overcome. If the obstacles are many and great, the speed will be less. Now the sanctified person is continually acquiring knowledge, not only in relation to the great and adorable object of his perfected love, but also in relation to his own physical and intellectual infirmities, the nature of temptations, and the subtle arts of the adversary of souls. In these infirmities, temptations, and evil arts, he finds very serious obstacles to his progress in holiness. But every day's experience, under the instructions and guidance of the Holy Spirit, teaches their nature and diminishes their power. He learns where his weakness is, and understands better than he did at first how to counteract it. He knows the artifices of the adversary, the insiduous manner of his ap-

proaches, and the way in which he can be resisted and defeated. And the result of this knowledge is, that many serious obstacles which existed before and which perplexed his progress, are removed. His increased knowledge of the character of God, the influence of the law of habit, the imparted influences of the Holy Spirit, have their natural and unobstructed effect, and accelerate, as they would not do under other circumstances, the ascendant flight of the soul.

These considerations evidently show, that the idea of growth in holiness, when the heart is already sanctified to God, is not an unreasonable one. On the contrary, it would seem on any principles of reason applicable to the case, that the growth of a sanctified soul in holiness would be much more rapid than that of a soul but partially sanctified. The testimony of those, who have arrived at the state of assurance of faith and perfected love, confirms these views. Their testimony is, that, after having reached this state, their growth in grace is much more rapid and sure than it was before. They are conscious of increased power against temptation, and of an increase of union with the divine will, to an extent unknown in their previous experience. What growth, then, must there be in angel minds, which are neither obstructed by inward nor by outward evils in their progress! What expansion with each revolving day! What increased intensity of desire! What higher and more triumphant energies of love!

In conclusion, we exhort those, who are sancti-

fied to the Lord, to grow abundantly in holiness. Of two persons, both of whom are sanctified persons, one may grow in holiness more rapidly and surely than an another. This is an important fact, and one that is often overlooked. The difference of growth in holiness, after the experience of sanctification, seems to us to depend, next to believing and earnest applications for divine assistance, upon growth in KNOWLEDGE. Little claim has any one to the character of a holy person, who is willing to be ignorant. We have not reference in this remark to the mere knowledge of natural things, which oftentimes perplexes rather than promotes the inward life, but to religious knowledge; to any thing and every thing which throws light upon the character, providences, and the will of God; and to whatever illustrates the character, relations, and moral and religious duties of man. Holiness, considered in its full extent, is a great study, and he only, who is willing to be a diligent and faithful student, will understand it. Hence we are told in the second epistle of Peter, that God hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, "through the KNOWLEDGE of him that has called us to glory and virtue;" and are directed in the same chapter to add "to our faith virtue, and to virtue KNOWLEDGE."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

On the Confession of Sin.

Should those, who are so far advanced in the religious life as to be justly regarded as sanctified or holy persons, confess sin? This is a question, which is sometimes asked with a degree of solicitude and from good motives. And besides, it is often adduced as one of the greatest objections to the doctrine of the realization of holiness in the present life, that those, who have experienced it, ought not to, and cannot confess sin.

First. The confession of sin during the whole course of the present life is exceedingly proper, for various reasons; and in the first place, because sin is an unspeakable evil. We suppose that those, who have experienced a perfected state of faith and love, will understand this remark more fully than others. They have tasted the bitter fruits of sin; they have in many cases endured a severe and terrible contest in driving it from the heart; they are now engaged momentarily in a constant warfare to prevent its re-entrance; they know it is the one great thing and the only thing which separates the soul from God; they know that every

sin, even the smallest, is exceedingly heinous in God's sight; they feel that they had rather die a thousand deaths, than voluntarily commit even the smallest sin. Now when they remember, that during a considerable portion of their lives they were sinning against God every day and hour; despising, injuring, and insulting continually that great and good Being, whom now their hearts as continually adore, they are penetrated with the deepest grief. They never, never can forget the greatness of their former degradation and guilt. And, in their present state of mind, they never can remember it, without being, at each distinct retrospection, deeply humbled and penitent. Indeed, as true confession consists much more in the state of the heart than in the expression of the lips, and as the surest mark of true confession is an earnest striving after the opposite of that which is confessed as wrong, those, who are earnestly seeking and practising holiness, may be said in the highest sense of the terms to be always acknowledging and always lamenting their sin. Their watching, their strife, their warfare is against sin, as the evil and bitter thing which their soul hates; and which their souls shall ever hate whenever and wherever committed, whether by themselves or others, at the present time or in times past.

Second.—There is a propriety and a practical importance in the confession of sin, during the whole course of the present life, because our various infirmities, our defects of judgment, our frequent ignorance of the motives and characters of our fel-

low-men, and the relatively wrong acts and feelings which originate in these sources, from which no one, in the present period of the history of the church, can reasonably expect to be free, require an atonement, as well as our wilful or voluntary transgressions. We do not suppose, that it is necessary here, to enter into an argument for the purpose of showing, that such imperfections, originally flowing from our fallen condition and our connection with Adam, require the application of Christ's blood. Such is not only our own belief; but we have reason to believe, that it is a doctrine which is generally conceded by those, who will be likely to take an interest in these inquiries. There are various passages of Scripture, such as Lev. 4 : 3, and Numb. 15 : 27–30, which have relation to such infirmities and sins, and which might be properly consulted, if the present were an occasion to enter into a minute examination of the subject.

It is in accordance with what has now been said, that Christians, who are well established in the interior life, whenever they have fallen into such errors and infirmities, experience no true peace of mind, until they find a sense of forgiveness. For an error in judgment, for an ill-placed word when there was no evil design or intention of saying what was wrong, for an action which was undesignedly a mistaken one either through undue remissness or through undue haste, for any unavoidable blindnesses and ignorances whatever, which are followed by evil and unhappy results, they find no resource but in an immediate and believing applica-

tion to the atoning blood. It is true, they do not ordinarily have those bitter feelings of condemnation and remorse, which they have, when they have committed a deliberate transgression; but they feel deep humiliation and sorrow of heart; they see the results of sin flowing from the original rebellion; and have what may perhaps be called an *instinctive* conviction, that the occasion is a fitting one for penitent grief and for humble confession. Now as such infirmities are very frequent, and as indeed they are unavoidable, so long as we come short of the intellectual and physical perfection of Adam, we shall have abundant occasion to confess our trespasses; and it will ever be true, that our sin, in this sense of the term, will always be before us.

It may be proper to remark here, that it was probably in this view of the subject that Mr. Wesley, although he held to the doctrine of Christian perfection or of perfect love, did not hold to the doctrine of *sinless* perfection. That is to say, he maintained that it was both our duty and our privilege to love God with all our heart; and also that this state of mind, viz. of assured faith and perfected love, had been actually, and in many cases, realized. He maintained, nevertheless, that this state was consistent with all those wrong judgments which are involuntary and unavoidable, and consequently with relatively wrong acts and affections; that we are continually liable to transgress in the respects which have been mentioned,

even while we are in a state of perfect love, and that the best of men may say from the heart,

"Every moment, Lord, I need
"The merit of thy death."

Under these circumstances, he thought it proper and necessary, that even persons, who, on evangelical principles, could justly lay claim to the blessing of sanctification, should continually humble themselves before God and make confession. This view seems to be correct. And it is very desirable, when we look at it in its practical results, as well as in its moral relations, that it should continue to be maintained, because it will constantly prompt us not only to seek perfection in love, which is the most important thing, but to seek perfection in manners, habits, health, words, knowledge, and all good judgment.

THIRD. It is proper, furthermore, to confess our sins, because there may be sins in us, and not merely those which result from infirmity and are involuntary, which are seen by the omniscient eye of God, but which may *not be obvious to ourselves.* We have no doubt that, as a general thing, we may rely upon our consciousness in confirmation of the great fact of perfection in love. Certainly it is a reasonable idea, that, as a general thing, a man may know in himself or in his own consciouness, whether he loves God or not; and whether he loves him with his whole heart or not. At the same time there may occasionally be cases, in which he is left in some degree of doubt. He may through the influence of some sudden temptation, be driven so closely upon the line which separates

rectitude from sin, that it is almost impossible for him to tell whether he has kept within it. The Scriptures also recognize the great deceitfulness of the human heart. Who, then, is able, either on philosophical or scripture principles, to assert, *absolutely and unconditionally*, that he has been free from sin, at least for any great length of time? We may, therefore, with great propriety, even if there were no other reason but this, ask the forgiveness of our trespasses, of our sins, or of whatever God sees amiss in us. And it is unquestionably our duty so to do.

We may add here, that it is generally, and perhaps we may say, universally the case, that those, who give good evidence of being in that state which we variously describe as assurance of faith and as perfect love, and which involves the possession of the blessing of present sanctification, speak of their state in a qualified, rather than in an absolute manner. In other words, they generally express themselves, (and it is exceedingly proper that they should do so,) merely as if they hoped or had reason to hope that they had experienced this great blessing, and were kept free from voluntary and known sin. Such a mode of expression seems to be unobjectionable; it is consistent with confession, and corresponds to the precise state of the case.

Fourth.—It is proper and important also to acknowledge our having sinned against God and to humble ourselves before him on account of sin, because we are thus continually reminded of the unspeakable condescension and mercy of God as manifested in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It

is impossible, that a truly holy mind, one that has deeply felt the living God within, should ever forget the depth of its former degradation, however different and however encouraging may be its present state. And whenever it calls to recollection its former pollution, it cannot be otherwise than deeply impressed with a sense of the Savior's wonderful goodness and love. May we not even conjecture, that it will be our privilege through all eternity to remember and to confess our former fallen state? Even in heaven, renewed and purified as we shall be, we shall, in one sense at least, be sinners saved by grace; and shall undoubtedly repeat with joy the song of the ransomed, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

With these considerations we leave the subject, after a single remark further. While it is proper for all to make a confession during life it is nevertheless true, that the mind of a person, who is truly in a sanctified state, is chiefly occupied with supplications and thanksgivings. Such persons may be said for the most part to be always praying, always supplicating, and in every thing giving thanks. The state of those, who possess this blessing, is very different from the condition of persons, who have nothing but their sins to speak of. Such is their peace of mind, such their delight in God's character, such their sense of inward purity, such their conformity to God's will, that their prevalent state must necessarily be one of divine communion and of holy rejoicing.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND.

Remarks on interior trials and desolations.

It is perhaps a common opinion, that those, who are greatly advanced in religion, and have experienced what may properly be regarded as the grace of present sanctification, are not very much tried and afflicted. They are supposed to possess not only an inheritance of constant peace, but of much joy.

That a truly sanctified person is never in darkness, in one sense of the term, viz. *condemnatory* darkness; in other words, that he never loses the grace of a confiding trust in God and of solid internal peace, which his Savior has given to him as his inheritance, is undoubtedly true. If there ever be an exception, as for instance when the mental powers are depressed and darkened by the pressure of some physical disease, yet such exceptions are, probably, few in number, are explainable on principles peculiar to themselves, and are not to be regarded as essentially affecting the general doctrine.

But although those, who are wholly devoted to God, may be said always to have a solid and permanent peace, it is not true, that they are exempt

from heavy afflictions both external and internal. On the contrary, there is some reason to believe, that those, who love most, will suffer most; that those, who are the strongest in the Lord, will have the heaviest burden to bear. "In the world," says the Savior, "ye shall have tribulation." "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ," says the Apostle, in his epistle to the Philippians, "not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." It is important to understand this, to know that it is our lot and our privilege to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, so that those, who enter into the way of holy living, which is just what it is described to be, viz. *a narrow way*, may not be discouraged and overcome in the season of heavy trial. Satan will say to them at such times. Where now is your God? And it is exceedingly desirable, that they should know how to answer him.

First.—It is reasonable to suppose, that a holy soul, one that has experienced the richness of sanctifying grace, will oftentimes be much afflicted in consequence of not finding in others a spirit corresponding to its own. In the present state of the world, when practical holiness is but partially understood and still less realized, such a soul, although the social principle remains strong in it, is necessarily solitary to a considerable degree. How can it enter with spirit and eagerness into worldly conversation? How can it participate with any degree of relish in vain worldly amusements and pleasures? Such souls are sometimes borne down with the desire of imparting to others the spiritual

tidings, which God has inwardly communicated to them. But they find few, and perhaps none that are ready and willing to hear them. And thus they sit alone in secret places, and shed in silence the solitary tear.

Second.—They are afflicted in view of the condition of the Church. With all disposition to be grateful for what amount of piety there is, and also to make all due allowance for the deficiences that exist, they perceive and cannot help perceiving that the Church is, to a considerable extent, in bondage. They see, very distinctly, that she lives far below her duties and privileges ; those duties and privileges to which her God calls her. It is their sympathy with the Divine mind, as well as their sorrow for the Church, which affects them. How can they possibly be without grief, in view of the insulted honor and the disregarded beneficence of the God whom they love ? And if this were possible, as it certainly cannot be, how is it possible for them to refrain from weeping, when the Church, for whom their bleeding Savior has purchased garments of light, voluntarily walk in sordid and defiled habiliments ?

Third.—They have feelings of deep compassion and sorrow for sinners, which others have not. We would not assert, that these feelings are always stronger than those of other persons ; but they appear to be more deeply rooted in the mind ; more thoroughly based upon principle ; more permanent and unchangeable. In view of the situation of sinners, they may

even be said to have continual heaviness; not a heaviness which is periodical; which goes and comes with a change of circumstances; but is, at least, in a modified sense of the term, continual. There is this peculiarity, however, that their sorrow, however deep it may be, is always calm. While they think much of sinners, they think more of God. And they know that God will be glorified, though sinners are destroyed. This consideration imparts a tranquillity of mind, which may sometimes be supposed to originate in absence of feeling. This calm, deep-rooted sorrow, in view of the danger of sinners and of the dishonor which they put upon God, although, in accordance with the laws of the human mind, it has its alternations with other feelings, and is subject to occasional variations, may yet be said, with a high degree of truth, to be always with them. It is in this respect peculiarly, that they may be said to sympathize with the blessed Savior in bearing the burden of the cross; since there can be no doubt, that it was on account of others far more than his own, that he was afflicted in the world, was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Fourth.—But this is not all. God sometimes sees fit to impose upon these, his beloved children, internal, as well as external crosses. There seems to be almost a necessity for this. "The life, which they now live, they live by faith on the Son of God." The Christian life is truly and emphatically a life of faith. A life of faith is necessarily the opposite of a life of direct vision. And how can

the principle of faith operate, much more how can it acquire strength, unless God shall at times withdraw himself from the direct vision, and leave the soul to its own obscurity? If a man, wishing to test the spirit of obedience in his son, commands the son to follow him in a certain direction, does he not render his own test unavailable, by taking him by the hand and dragging him along? And so our heavenly Father, if he wishes to test and to strengthen our faith, must he not sometimes take us out of the region of openness and clearness of sight, and place us in the midst of entanglements, uncertainties, and shadows? What we need, what we must have, what is absolutely indispensable to our interior salvation, is faith; faith which gives the victory; faith strong, unwavering, adamantine. It was by want of faith that we fell; it is by want of faith that we are kept in continual bondage; and it is only by the restoration of faith that we can sunder the chains that shackle us, and walk forth in spiritual freedom. But faith can never arise to that degree of invigoration, which our necessities so imperiously demand, while we are permitted to walk continually in the field of open vision and under the sunlight of present manifestations. Hence there seems to be a necessity, that he who has made us and who loves us with an infinity of love, should, nevertheless, sometimes wrap himself in the majesty of uncreated darkness, in order that we may learn the great lesson of following God without seeing Him, and of appreciat-

ing his uttered word, his simple declaration, at the same value with his manifested realities and acts.

It is here, then, that we find the secret reason, that God sees fit to leave to interior desolations and sorrows those, who are truly his sanctified people. Hence it is, that he not only shows us the vanities of the world, and the desolations of the church, the present and prospective wretchedness of impenitent sinners, a burden without any thing else to enhance it which is heavy to be borne; but he also withdraws at times the light of present manifestations; he withholds the comfort of inward sensible joys; he leaves the understanding, and even at times the affections in a painful state of comparative inertness and aridity; he permits Satan, in addition to these fearful evils, to assail us with his fiery darts, injecting into the intellect a multitude of unholy thoughts, and besieging us continually with sharp and varied temptations. But there still remains the blessed privilege of believing. We can still say, our expectation is from the Lord. We still have the privilege of declaring, even in the deep dejection and brokenness of our hearts, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Happy are they, who endure these grievous trials without shrinking. Thrice happy, who like soldiers in a severe contest that have lost all but honor, can still assert, the enemy has not taken the standard with which they went into battle; and that in the loss of all things else, they still retain their confidence in God. Such souls are not

only redeemed, but purified. They have passed the decisive test, the object of which is to ascertain whether they love God for himself or for his favors, and have not been found wanting. If there were dross upon them before, it has been burnt off in this fiery trial. In the purification and strengthening of our faith, (that glorious principle which unites us to God, and which opens in the heart the full fountains of submission, gratitude, and love,) we are recompensed, and more than recompensed, for the temporary loss of all outward goods and all interior consolations. Henceforth there is union between the soul and its Beloved. It has no more occasion to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He returns with assurances, that wipe away present tears, and give the presage of future victories. God, in his condescension, permits himself to be conquered. Infinite love is led captive.

[In connection with the remarks of this chapter, we take the liberty to introduce to the reader some stanzas of Madame Guyon, translated into English by the poet Cowper, which seem in a happy manner to express the state of a soul, which is temporarily left to interior desolations.]

The trial of Christian Faith.

'T was my purpose, on a day
To embark and sail away:
As I climbed the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide.
"Come," he said,—"ascend—make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care ;
They, that rowed us, held their eyes
Fixed upon the starry skies ;
Others steer'd, or turn'd the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried ;
In a moment it was night ;
Ships and skies were out of sight,
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn ?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more ?
No—"My soul"—I cried, "be still ;
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hasten'd to convey
Both my frail supports away ;
Seized my rushes ; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves ;
Down I went and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe ;
And I saw him turn and laugh ;
"Friend," he cried, "adieu ! lie low,
While the wint'ry storms shall blow ;
When the spring has calm'd the main,
You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his wings and soar away ;
Now I marked his rapid flight ;
Now he leaves my aching sight ;
He is gone, whom I adore ;
'T is in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled, then, and fear'd
When my LOVE had disappear'd!
"Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
"Whelm'd beneath the rolling tide?"
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone, and would not hear.

Ah! return and love me still;
See me subject to thy will;
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear;
All is good, if thou art near.

Yet he leaves me—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate—
Have I sinn'd? O, say wherein;
Tell me and forgive my sin!
King, and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth, all my will to thine;
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence break my heart;
Go, then, and for ever too;
All is right, that thou wilt do.

This was just what LOVE intended:
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
LOVE return'd to me and smiled;
Never strife shall more betide,
'Twixt the Bridegroom and his Bride.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

On the necessity of possessing the Gifts and Graces of God in purity of spirit.

It is difficult to express and even to conceive of the subtleties and insinuations of selfishness. It enters every path. It lurks in every secret place. And wherever it finds its way, it pollutes, poisons, and destroys. It sometimes attaches itself by a process almost imperceptible, to God's most valuable gifts and graces; those which are spiritual, as well as those which are natural. An individual, for instance, is possessed of great natural ability. This ability is a gift of God. But how often it is, that the possessor, thinking but little of the great Author of the gift, regards it as something peculiarly his own, and instead of seeing God in it, sees only himself. Almost unconsciously to himself, and greatly to his spiritual injury, he is experiencing a secret elevation of spirit, and is taking a hidden complacency in an intellectual possession, which, when properly considered, should have increasingly detached him from self, and led him nearer to his Maker.

But what is surprising and almost inexplicable,

there is danger of the same insinuating and infectious influence, attaching itself even to the spiritual gifts of God. A man, for instance, is endowed, through the operations of the Holy Spirit, with the invaluable grace of HUMILITY. He ascribes nothing to himself. He takes a low place; and he feels that he ought to take a low place before God. But before he is aware of it, self-love is secretly winding itself about this ennobling Christian affection, and endeavoring to extract some personal merit out of it. There is a secret and almost imperceptible feeling, (for in this matter Satan is careful not to show himself too prominently,) not only that his humility is some evidence in his favor, but that his humility itself is worth something.

Again, how often it is that the man who possesses true Christian benevolence, is assailed in the same insidious way! There is no question that he is truly benevolent and benevolent too on the highest christian principles; but after a time he begins, almost unconsciously to himself, to poison this eminent Christian grace by an infusion of self-gratulation. Even the missionary of the Cross, as he toils beneath the frozen skies of Greenland or amid the burning sands of Africa, finds the secret but deceptive suggestion springing up, he hardly knows whence or how, that his life of toil and suffering has some little merit, which he can call *his own.*

And similar results may be noticed in other cases. The soul, charmed by some soothing and in-

sidious whispers, begins to lull itself to rest and to repose upon the couch of its own virtues, its humility, its gratitude, its inviolable veracity, its benevolence, or some other moral and christian grace, instead of resting exclusively upon the merits of Christ, and ascribing all its gifts and graces to the mere mercy of God. These views will apply essentially, among other things, to joyous states of mind. The Scriptures abundantly assure us, that there is such a state of mind as holy joy. But true joy, "the joy of the Holy Ghost," flows up and refreshes the inward heart as a pure fountain, only so long as the soul is fixed upon God, as the centre of its thought and of its undivided affection. As soon as we begin to think how happy we are, and to dwell upon and to please ourselves with the thought, the joy itself becomes an offence, and diffuses a secret, but destructive influence through the inward life. To be happy in our own happiness, instead of being happy in God, is to drink from a cistern of our own construction, "a broken cistern which can hold no water." And it is in connection with such views and facts, that Fenelon has very correctly said, that "the most eminent graces are the most deadly poisons, if we rest in them and regard them with complacency." "It is the sin" he adds, "of the fallen angels; *they only turned to themselves, and regarded with complacency their state; at that instant they fell from heaven, and became the enemies of God.*"

It is exceedingly important, therefore, that all the Christian gifts and graces should be possessed

in purity of spirit, uncontaminated by any unholy mixtures of an earthly nature. The mere suggestion, that they have merit of themselves and separate from the God who gives them, if it be received with the least complacency, necessarily inflicts a deep wound. They are, accordingly, held in purity of spirit and with the divine approbation, only when their tendency is to separate the soul from every thing inward and outward, considered as objects of complacency and of spiritual rest, and to unite it more and more closely to God. In the language of the writer just now referred to, "we must sacrifice even the gifts of God;" that is to say, we must cease to regard them and to take complacency in them, in themselves considered, that we may have God himself. We do not find the parent, who has that degree of affection for his child, which may be called entire or perfect love, making his love a distinct object of his thoughts, and rejoicing in it, as such a distinct object; that would not be the genuine operation of perfect love. If his love is perfect, he has no time and no disposition to think of any thing but the beloved object, towards which his affections are directed. His love is so deep, so pure, so fixed and centred upon one point, that the sight of self and of his own personal exercises, is lost. It ought to be thus in the feelings, which we exercise towards God; and undoubtedly such will be the result, when the religious feeling has reached a certain degree of intensity. That is to say, when the feeling is perfect, the mind is not occupied with the feeling itself, but

with the object of the feeling. The heart, if we may so express it, seems to recede from us; it certainly does so as an object of distinct contemplation; and the object of its affections comes in and takes its place. Oh the blessedness of the heart, that, free from self and its secret and pernicious influences, sees nothing but God; that recognizes, even in its highest gifts and graces, nothing but God; that would rather be infinitely miserable with God, if it were possible, than infinitely happy without him.

In connection with these remarks we are enabled to understand and appreciate the state of mind, which is described in some primitive writers on interior experience, as a state of cessation from "reflex acts." By REFLEX ACTS, as we employ the phrase here and as it appears to be employed by the writers referred to, we mean those acts of the mind, in which the soul turns inward upon itself; and ceasing for a time to regard the mere will of God as the only good, takes a self-conscious satisfaction in its own exercises. Such acts, when they are indulged in, stand directly in the way of the highest results of the religious life. On the other hand, he, who has entirely ceased to put forth acts of this kind, and loves God to the entire forgetfulness of self, losing sight even of his own exercises, in consequence of being fully occupied with an infinitely higher object, has reached the broad and calm position of spiritual rest, the region of inward and abiding peace. A region, where there is no noisy clamor; no outcries and

contests of the passions; no contrivances of prejudice, interest, and ambition; no rebellious sighing and tears of the natural spirit; but all is hushed and lost in the one deep conviction, that there is nothing good, nothing permanently true, nothing desirable, no, not in heaven itself, but pure and everlasting union with the will of God. Of such a soul it may be said eminently, that it holds the gifts of God in purity; since it loses the distinct perception and knowledge of the gifts, in the consciousness of union with the Giver.

I.

They say their path with flowers is strown,
And all their way is bright;
But as for me, I walk alone,
Encircled with the night.
But do not think my joy the less,
Oh, no! I love to be
Abandoned, in my helplessness,
To deep obscurity.

II.

I love the thunder's voice to hear,
To see the lightnings play;
And smile, when many a danger near
Comes thronging round my way.
'Tis then all human help is vain,
All human hopes o'erthrown;
And, in my great necessity,
I REST IN GOD ALONE.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

On the principle of inward quietude or stillness.

We proceed in this chapter to lay down and explain a principle, which is more or less distinctly recognized by writers on Christian experience; and which, by the common consent of those who have examined it, is very intimately connected with the progress and perfection of the interior Christian life. The principle is that of inward QUIETUDE OR STILLNESS, ; in other, words, *a true and practical ceasing from self.*

First. — This principle involves, in the first place, a cessation from all inordinate and selfish outward activity. It does not, it will be remembered, exclude an outward activity of the right kind. To entertain any idea of this kind, would be a great error. But it disapproves and condemns that spirit of worldly movement and progress, that calculating and self-interested activity, that running to and fro without seriously looking to God and without a quiet confidence in Him, which has been in all ages of the world the dishonor and the bane of true Christianity. How much of what may be called secular scheming and planning there is in

the church at the present time! How much of action, prosecuted on principles, which certainly cannot be acceptable to a truly holy heart! While it exhibits much of true piety and much of the right kind of action, is it not evident, that the church exhibits a great deal also, both in its plans of personal and of public activity, of that restless, unsanctified, and grasping eagerness, which characterizes, and may be expected to characterize those who live and act, as if there were no God in the world! The principle of quietude or stillness decidedly condemns this injurious and evil course.

Second.—But this principle has inwardly still more important results. The true state of internal quietude or stillness implies three things.

(1.)—And accordingly our first remark is, that true quietness of soul involves a cessation from unnecessary wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations. If we indulge an unnatural and inordinate curiosity; if we crowd the intellect not only with useful knowledge, but with all the vague and unprofitable rumours and news of the day, it is hardly possible, on the principles of mental philosophy, that the mind should be at rest. The doctrine of religious quietude conveys the notion of a state of intellect so free from all unnecessary worldly intruders, that God can take up his abode there as the one great idea, which shall either exclusively occupy the mind, or shall so far occupy it as to bring all other thoughts and reflections into entire harmony with itself. This is, philosophically, one of the first conditions of union with God. It seems

to be naturally impossible, that we should realize an entire harmony or oneness with the divine mind, while the soul is so occupied with worldly thoughts flowing into it, as almost to shut out the very idea of God. A state of religious or spiritual quietude is, in other words, a state of rest in God. The idea of God, therefore, that magnificent and glorious idea, must so occupy the intellect, must be so interwoven with all its operations and modes of thinking, that the thoughts of other things, which so often agitate and afflict the religious mind, may be easily shut out. And in order to do this, they, who would be perfect in Christ Jesus, must not mingle too much in the concerns of the world. Little have they to do with the unprofitable frivolities and pleasures of secular society; with idle village gossiping; with the trades and adventures and speculations of those who hasten to be rich; with the heats and recriminations of party politics, and many other things, which it would be easy to mention. No reading, also, should be indulged in, which shall tend to separate between the soul and God. Knowledge is profitable, it is true, but not all kinds of knowledge. It is better, certainly, if we cannot consistently with religious principles have a knowledge of both, to be familiar with the psalms of David, than with the poems of Homer; not only because the former are in a higher strain, but especially because heavenly inspiration should ever take precedence of that, which is earthly. When, however, we read in the world's books from the sense of duty, when we may be said to read and

study for God and with God, then indeed, the great idea of the Divinity remains present and operative in the soul. And such inquiries and studies are always consistent with Christian quietude, because the mind, venturing forth at the requisition of the great Master within, returns instinctively at the appointed time, to the inward centre of rest. Hence we should lay it down as an important rule, to chasten the principle of curiosity, and to know nothing which cannot be made, either directly or indirectly, religiously profitable. Such knowledge and such only, will harmonize with the presence of the great idea of God. All other knowledge tends to exclude it. And hence it is, that it can be so often said of those, who possess all worldly knowledge, to whom all arts and languages and sciences are familiar, that God is not in all their thoughts. The intellect is not in sufficient repose from the outward and purely worldly pressure constantly made upon it to receive Him. He comes to the door, but finds no entrance, and leaves them alone in their folly.

Perhaps in order to prevent mistakes, it should be added, that, when the mind is thus in a state of quietness and repose from worldly and errant imaginations, it does not by any means follow, as some may suppose, that it is, therefore, in a state of sluggish and insentient idleness. Not at all. No sooner has it reached the state of true stillness, by ceasing from its own imaginative vanities, and thus giving entrance to the purifying and absorbing conception of the great Divinity, than it be-

comes silently, but actively meditative on the great idea. Not, indeed, in a discursive and examinative way; not in a way of curious inquiry and of minute analysis; but still active and meditative. Much in the manner, perhaps, that an affectionate child silently and delightedly meditates on the idea of an absent parent, not analytically and curiously, but with that high and beautiful meditation, which exists in connection with the purest love. Or much as any persons, who sustain to each other the relation of dear and intimate friendship, when in the providence of God they are separated at a distance, often repose in mental stillness from all other thoughts inconsistent with the one loved idea; and thus reciprocally the mind, active in respect to the object before it, though still and quiet in respect to every thing else, centres and dwell with each other's image.

(2.) Again, the state of internal quietude implies a cessation or rest from unrestrained and inordinate desires and affections. Such a cessation becomes comparatively easy, when God has become the ruling idea in the thoughts; and when other ideas, which are vain, wandering, and in other ways inconsistent with it, are excluded. This rest or stillness of the affections, when it exists in the highest degree, is secured by perfect faith in God, necessarily resulting in perfect love. We have already had occasion to say that perfect faith implies, in its results, perfect love. How can we possibly have perfect faith in God, perfect confidence that he will do all things right and well,

when at the same time we are wanting in love to him? From perfect faith, therefore, perfect love necessarily flows out, baptizing, as it were, and purifying all the subordinate powers of the soul. In other words, under the influence of this predominating principle, the perfect love of God resting upon perfect faith in God, the harmony of the soul becomes restored; the various appetites, propensities, and affections act each in their place and all concurrently; there are no disturbing and jarring influences, and the beautiful result is that quietness of spirit, which is declared to be "in the sight of God of great price."

Those, who are privileged by divine assistance, to enjoy this interior rest and beautiful stillness of the passions, are truly lovely to the beholder. The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, tost about by conflicting passions, and are not more unhappy in themselves, than they are unlovely in the sight of holy beings. There is a want of interior symmetry and union; that guiding principle of divine love, which consolidates and perfects the characters of holy beings, is absent; the lower parts of their nature have gained the ascendency, and there is internal jarring and discord and general moral deformity. In such a heart God does not and cannot dwell. How different is the condition of that heart, which is pervaded by the power of a sanctifying stillness, and which, in the cessation of its own jarring noise, is prepared to listen to the "still small voice!" It is here that

God not only takes up his abode, but continually instructs, guides, and consoles.

On this part of the subject, in order to prevent any misapprehension, we make two brief remarks. The first is, that the doctrine of stillness or quietude of the desires and passions, does not necessarily exclude an occasional agitation arising from the *instinctive* part of our nature. The INSTINCTS are so constituted, that they act, not by cool reason and reflection, but by an inexpressibly quick and agitated movement. Such is their nature. Such agitation is entirely consistent with holiness. And it is not unreasonable to suppose, that even the amazement and fears, which are ascribed to our blessed Saviour at certain periods of his life, are to be attributed to the operation of this part of his nature, which is perfectly consistent with entire resignation and with perfect confidence in God. The other remark is, that the doctrine of internal quietude, pervading and characterizing the action of the sensibilities, is not inconsistent with feelings of displeasure, and even of anger. Our Savior was at times grieved, displeased, angry; as he had abundant reason to be, in view of the hardness of heart and the sins, which were exposed to his notice. Anger, (so far as it is not purely *instinctive*, which at its first rise and for a mere moment of time it may be,) is, in its nature, entirely consistent with reason and reflection; is consistent with the spirit of suplication, and consistent also, even in its strong exercises, with entire agreement and relative quietude in all parts of the soul. In other words,

although there is deep feeling in one part of the soul, the other parts, such as the reason, the conscience, and the will, are so entirely consentient, that the great fact of holy, internal quietude, which depends upon a perfect adjustment of the parts to each other, is secured. A strong faith in God, existing in the interior recesses of the soul, and inspiring a disposition to look with a constant eye to his will alone, keeps every thing in its right position. Hence there still remains the great and important fact of holy internal rest, even at such trying times.

(3.) We proceed now to the third characteristic. The true state of internal quietude implies a cessation not only from unnecessarily wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations, not only a rest from irregular desires and affections, but implies, in the third place, a perfect submission of the will; in other words, a perfect renunciation of our own purposes and plans, and a cheerful and perfect acquiescence in the holy will of God. Such a renunciation of the will is indispensably requisite. It is not to be understood that we are to have no will of our own, in the *literal* sense. This would be inconsistent with moral agency. But that in its action, under all circumstances, however adverse and trying, our will is cheerfully and wholly accordant with God's will. A mind, in such a state, must necessarily be at rest. It realizes that God is at the helm of affairs; and that necessarily all the plans of his wise and great administration shall come to pass. Why then should it be troubled? "What a blessed thing it is," says

Dr. Payson, "to lose one's will. Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment; for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished." The blessedness of such a soul is indeed indescribable. It is an inward death out of which springs inward and eternal life; a self annihilation, out of which rises immortal power. The man, who has the true quietude, is like a large ship firmly at anchor in a storm. The clouds gather around, the winds blow, the heavy waves dash against her, but she rides safe in her position, in conscious dignity and power. Or perhaps his situation is more nearly expressed by the memorable and sublime simile of Goldsmith,

> "As some tall cliff, that rears its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and mid-way leaves the storm,
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

But some will say, Is there to be no action; and are we to do nothing? A person in this state of mind, being at rest in the will of God, and never out of that divine will, is operative precisely as God would have him so; moving as God moves, stopping where God stops. He is at rest, but *never idle.* His God forbids idleness. Therefore he keeps in the line of divine cooperation, and works *with* God. There may be less of vain and noisy pretension, and sometimes less of outward and visible activity, but there is far more wisdom, and far more actual efficiency, for God is with him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

Additional remarks on the state of interior stillness.

Fenelon has somewhere remarked to this effect, that, in our inward feelings, "*it is often more easy to perceive what is the result of nature, than of grace.*" This remark may perhaps be of doubtful correctness in the view of some persons; but it is certainly worthy of serious examination. If it be true, it is a remark, which involves important principles.

We are aware, that the common opinion is the opposite of this. It is generally supposed that the emotions and affections of the religious life are more marked and perceptible, than those of the natural life. It seems to be a prevalent idea, that a person, who is not internally perceptive of strong emotions and affections, has but little claims to depth and power of religious experience. It is implied in this idea, that there must be a salient or projective aspect to these feelings, so that to the subjects of them they shall appear, in comparison with other feelings, to stand out distinctly and prominently perceptible. It is to this particular phasis of the common doctrine, that the remark of Fenelon, viz. that, in our inward experience, it

is more easy to perceive what is the result of nature, than of grace, is particularly opposed. He would not by any means deny the strength of religious emotions and feelings in those, who are truly and eminently pious. This would be a great error. His idea is, that, when the soul is wholly given to God, there is such an entire harmony and internal rest, that no one of the religious affections, however strong they may be, is comparatively so much in advance of what might reasonably be expected of other religious feelings, as necessarily to claim and secure a distinct and particular notice. All are the subjects of a perfect relative adjustment; all are kept in their place by the superintendence of the principle of perfect love; all are sprinkled over and bright with the celestial dew; so that one part or exercise is as beautiful in its place as another, and as much calculated to arrest particular attention as another. The result is the harmony, the internal stillness, and the beauty, which must ever characterize true holiness.

This doctrine is in accordance with the facts, which from time to time present themselves to notice in the annals of personal Christian experience. The interesting form of the religious life, of which this doctrine may be regarded as the theological or philosophical expression, seems, indirectly at least, to be indicated in those beautiful expressions in 2d Corinthians, where the Apostle speaking of himself and others, says, " as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always re-

joicing; as poor, yet making many rich; *as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*" He, who is known and yet unknown, dying and yet living, sorrowful yet rejoicing, poor yet communicating riches, having nothing, and yet possessing all things, is the subject of feelings, the result of whose various action, strange as it may seem, is perfect harmony and internal calm. His fame is counterbalanced and harmonized by his obscurity; his sorrow by his joy; his poverty by his riches; his absolute possession of nothing by his possession of all things; so that the soul, pressed as it were by equal forces in opposite directions, necessarily maintains the central position of interior rest.

The state of mind, of which we are speaking, appears to be disclosed in one of the short prayers, that are found in Fenelon's Pious Reflections; a part of which is as follows.

"Oh Lord, I know not what I should ask of Thee. Thou only knowest what I want; and Thou lovest me, if I am thy friend, better than I can love myself, Oh Lord, give to me, thy child, what is proper, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before Thee. I open my heart to Thee. Behold my wants, which I am ignorant of; but do Thou behold and do according to thy mercy. Smite, or heal! Depress me, or raise me up! I adore all thy purposes, without knowing them. I am silent; I offer myself in sacrifice."

Such supplications give evidence of a mind, that is at rest in itself; a mind, that reposes with entire

confidence, whatever may be its temptations and sorrows, upon the Divine Mind.

The religious state of Madame Guyon, in the latter part of her life, illustrates this form of Christian experience. "In these last times," she says, "I can hardly speak at all of my dispositions. It is because my state has become simple and without variations. It is a profound annihilation. I find nothing in myself, to which I can give a name; [that is, no feelings so specific and remarkable, separate from this simplicity and this loss of self in God, as to enable me to describe them.] All that I know, is, that God is infinitely holy, righteous, good, and happy."—"All good is in Him. As to myself, I am a mere NOTHING. To me every condition seems equal. All is lost in his immensity, like a drop of water in the sea. In this divine immensity, the soul sees itself no more."

In that state of internal experience, which is described by Madame Guyon, there seems to be a perfect balance and harmony of the different parts of the mind. There may be deep feeling, (and there is in reality very deep feeling,) but it is so perfectly controlled by a sense of union with the will of God, that the result is complete simplicity and rest of soul. Just as it is in a piece of complicated machinery. If the wheels and other parts are out of order, or if there is much friction, the action of the machinery is perplexed and is really weak, although there is exceedingly great jarring and discordant noise. But when the wheels are all in position, and there is no friction, the action may be

one of tremendous power, and yet so easy and quiet as to be hardly perceptible. And such is the true kingdom of God in the soul. It comes and exists with power, but with great simplicity. There is nothing in it, in itself considered, which is calculated to attract and secure worldly observation. It is mighty; but like God himself, it is inwardly silent, "a still small voice." The religiously quiet man, that is to say, the man who is inwardly and truly subdued and quiet in consequence of religion, is really the man of great religious strength; and yet this strength in consequence of that harmonious silence of movement, which is the result of its own perfection, is so hidden from his view, that he seems to be hardly conscious of its existence. But it is very different with the natural man; and also with the Christian, who still retains a large infusion of the natural element. While the operations of the sanctified man are harmonious and quiet; and therefore, are withdrawn, in a great measure, from distinct inward notice; those of the natural mind are not only self-interested, but are restless, impetuous, and contradictory; and, therefore, as a matter of course are mentally prominent and perceptible. The true controlling principle of the mind, in the case of the natural man, is gone; and its parts in action strike and jar upon each other with an inward concussion, like the hinges of the gates of Hell, that grate "harsh thunder."

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

On spiritual cooperation with God.

It is very obvious, that man, considered as a rational and voluntary being, is designed for action. And when we consider the relation of entire dependence, which man sustains to his Creator, it is no less obvious, that human action ought to assume and to maintain the shape of cooperation with God. This is designed to be, and it ought to be, the great object of our life, viz. COOPERATION WITH GOD.

First.—In endeavoring to ascertain the principles of this important subject, we remark in the first place, that we are not to undertake to decide for ourselves, (that is to say, by a reference to our own wishes merely,) what we are to do, and what we are not to do. Such a course would exhibit a disposition to cooperate with ourselves, if we may so express it, rather than with God. On the contrary, realizing deeply the general fact of our liability to error, we should ever be in that state of mind, which will lead us with meekness and simplicity to inquire what our heavenly Father will have us to do. We should have no choice of our

own, which shall be, in any degree whatever, at variance with his choice. The thing to be done, whatever it may be, must be left with him. This is one condition, on which we can cooperate with God; and without which it is evident, that no acceptable cooperation with Him can take place.

SECOND.—We are not, in the second place, while we leave to God to ascertain the object to be done, to undertake of ourselves to prescribe the TIME of doing it. God has not only a work to be done, but He also has a time of doing it. His time is the right time; and no other time is. David was willing to build a house of worship for the Lord. But the time, which infinite wisdom prescribed for this great work, had not arrived. And in the spirit of acquiescence, he left it to his successor. In repeated instances the Savior expressed the sentiment, that "his hour was not yet come": implying very evidently that the great events of his life, whether of action or of suffering, had their appropriate time. And neither the protestations of friends nor the dictation of enemies could induce Him to violate the maxims of true wisdom, by anticipating, even for a moment, that appropriate period. If, therefore, we gird ourselves for action, however good the object to be done may be, either before the appropriate time or after it, we do not cooperate with God, who always acts precisely at the right time. This is a point, which it is very important to remember. Persons are more likely to fall into error here, than in the particular which was first mentioned. There is a sort of latent feeling, (a very

unrighteous feeling it is,) that if God is permitted exclusively to designate the object, we should have some degree of liberty in exercising our own wisdom, either partially or wholly, in the designation of the time. In other words, we are apt to feel, that a less perfect submission is required in regard to the time, than in regard to the object. This tendency must be carefully guarded against.

THIRD.—We are not, in the third place, while we leave to God to ascertain the object to be done and the time of doing it, to undertake to decide for ourselves as to the MANNER of doing it. We know how it is in ordinary life. A servant sometimes, or even a son will do what the master or father has commanded, and do it at the right time; but will do it perhaps with excitement and rudeness of feeling, without true cordiality of heart and that laborious care, which might reasonably be expected. It is true, that we have here the essentials of a visible and operative cooperation; but it is evident, that we have not that higher inward and mental cooperation, which God requires. We must cooperate cordially. If we are associated with others, we must be willing to take the first place or the last place, to act as leader or servant just as God chooses. We must also take any part of the work, which God sees fit to impose upon us; that which is esteemed low and degrading, as well as that which is more agreeable to refinement of taste and to prevailing notions of honor and dignity. In every thing of this kind, and in every thing else which can properly be included in the

MANNER of doing what God imposes, we are required to follow cheerfully and unhesitatingly the indications of the Divine Will. Otherwise there is no true co-operation.

FOURTH.—In order to realize personally the conditions of divine cooperation, which have been mentioned, it is necessary to be mentally in a state of PASSIVITY, as it is sometimes expressed; or more properly and truly, *of strict impartiality* before God. In other words, we must be willing to submit ourselves to the divine guidance, without the least resistance or bias of mind; remaining in the attitude of silent and sincere waiting upon God, that we may learn from Him what he would have us to do; and also at what time and in what manner. The language of our souls must be essentially that of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "My soul, wait thou only upon the Lord; for my expectation is from him." And it is implied in this especially, that our minds should not be under the influence of prejudice or of wrong passion in any form. When the mind has arrived at the state of entire submission and of holy impartiality, resulting in the removal of the stains of prejudice and the shades of passion, it resembles a clear and bright mirror; reflecting easily and distinctly the desires and purposes of God. In this state of mind, it is easy to leave every thing with Him; to receive from Him implicitly the annunciation of the thing to be done, and also all the attendant conditions of doing it. God is pleased to be present with, and to operate in such a soul. The Holy Spirit teaches it; and it has

both the power to hear and the spirit to obey. But in any other condition of mind there must necessarily be a conflict between the agitated and self-interested will of the creature and the decisions of the Supreme Mind.

Fifth.—When we enter into the state of cooperation with God, we must feel, that our agency is entirely dependent and secondary in all the subsequent progress of the work, whatever it is, not less than in its incipient stages. I know that man has will, and that he has power. It would be a great error to deny or to doubt it. But it is equally true, that he is dependent; and that, in a very important sense, he has nothing. We must, therefore, not only begin in our nothingness; but must be willing to remain in it. It is a partnership, where we must realize, that not only all the capital; but, when properly considered, that all the personal operative power are from one source. Man works, it is true; but God works in him. Man's working without God's working, as the basis of it, is of no avail. Hence there must be no undue anxiety, no unsuitable and excited eagerness, no methods and plans of action, originated and prosecuted on worldly principles; which necessarily implies some distrust of the skill and resources of the great Being, who has thus condescended to work by means of human instrumentality. We must move when God moves; stop when He stops; deliberate when He deliberates; act when He acts. Any assumption on our part of superior wisdom or strength, any disposition to move in anticipation of his move-

ment, or in any way to forestall the divine intimations, would be getting not only out of the position of dependence and nothingness, but out of the line of cooperation.

Sixth.—As closely connected with what has already been said, we remark further, that, in cooperating with God, it seems to be necessary, that we should be in a state of recipiency, rather than of communication. In other words, it being admitted that we have nothing of our own which we can communicate or give to God, it would seem to follow, that our cooperation, so far as it has an existence at all, must depend upon the fact of our receiving from him. Accordingly it seems to be our great duty, by meekness and simplicity of heart, by freedom from worldly vanities and entire self-renunciation, to put ourselves in the true receptive attitude. We must remember, especially as unbelief is apt to find its way in at this entrance, that God is always ready to communicate himself; we need not fear, that our divine associate in this great co-partnership will be found wanting. On the contrary, it is his desire, his delight, his highest happiness to communicate himself. And the reason why he does not communicate himself to all men at once, is the existence in their bosoms of obstacles, which they themselves have voluntarily placed there. So that the highest honor and the highest power of man is, having put away these obstacles, to wait upon God, in the exercise of simple faith, for the reception of the divine sufficiency.

But some will say here also, in connection with the views now presented, Shall we remain inactive? I reply, that man is justly and efficiently active, when he is active in communication with God; and yet remaining deeply in his own sphere of nothingness. Man never acts to higher and nobler purpose, than when, in the realization of his own comparative nihility, he places himself in the receptive position, and lets God work in him. He, who is receptive, is neither idle nor unprofitable. In the intercourse between man and his Maker, it is the receptive and not the communicative activity, which is the source of truth, riches, and power. The religious man, in his receptive activity, is like the earth, (so far as we can compare things mental with material,) which receives into its ploughed and expanded bosom the morning dew and the summer shower and the daily sunshine; that thus, by being prepared to receive them, and by being endowed with abundant communications from without and above, it may subsequently become rich in itself; and in its own vitality, as it were, be crowned with fruit and flower. Or perhaps we may say more appropriately, that he is like those scholars, who are impressed with a sense of their own inferiority and ignorance, and are willing to sit patiently and humbly at the feet of their distinguished teachers, that they may grow in knowledge. Their minds are receptive, but not inert; are in the attitude of listening, but are not idle. They ultimately, in the way of cooperation with what they have received, become fruitful in themselves; but

it is only because they are humble and attentive recipients in the first instance.

SEVENTH.—Besides that cooperation in particular emergencies, which has already been remarked upon, we may observe further, that God requires a constant cooperation; a cooperation moment by moment; what some writers have described "*as living to God by the moment.*" It is an universal law, unalterable as God is and lasting as eternity, that no created being can be truly holy, useful, or happy, who is knowingly and deliberately out of the line of divine cooperation, even *for a moment.* Accordingly we are to consider every moment as consecrated to God. It is true, that, in order to the full and assured life of God in the soul, there must be the general act of Consecration, which has already been explained in a former Chapter; and which is understood to relate to a man's whole nature, and to cover the whole ground of time and eternity. And we may say further, that it is proper to recall distinctly to mind and to repeat at suitable times the general act of Consecration: but it does not appear to be necessary, in the strict sense of the terms or in any other sense than that of repeating it, to RENEW it, unless it has been, at some period, really withdrawn. But while the general act remains good, and diffuses its consecrative influence over the whole course of our being, it is necessary to consecrate ourselves in particulars, as the events or occasions of such particular consecration may successively arise. And in the remark, as we now wish it to be understood, we do not mean merely

those events, which, while they are distinct, are peculiarly marked and important; but all events of whatever character. In other words, although we may have consecrated ourselves to God in a general way and by an universal act of consecration, in all respects and for all time, we must still consecrate ourselves to him in each separate duty and trial, which his Providence imposes, and *moment by moment.* The present moment, therefore, is, in a special sense, the important moment, the divine moment; the moment, which we cannot safely pass, without having the divine blessing upon it.

Thus extensive is the doctrine of divine cooperation, when it is rightly understood. How thankful should we be, thus to be permitted, to enter into partnership, insignificant as we are, and to become co-workers with God! Such was the life of Enoch, of Abraham, of Daniel, of John, of Paul. How the idea of the life of man, thus united with the life and activity of God, throws discouragement and dishonor upon all low and grovelling pursuits, and at once elevates and sanctifies our nature!

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

Distinction between impulses and a sanctified judgment.

It is sometimes the case, that persons act from certain interior impressions, which may properly be termed IMPULSES. It would certainly be very injurious to the cause of holiness, if the doctrine should prevail, that mere interior impressions or impulses may of themselves become the rule of conduct to a holy person. That persons in sanctification are under a divine guidance, and that they cannot retain the grace of sanctification without such guidance, is entirely true. But it has sometimes been the case, that men have mistaken natural impulses for the secret inspirations of the Spirit; and in the flattering belief of being guided by a higher power, have experienced no other guidance than that of their own rebellious passions. On the danger of such a state, of which the church has seen too many melancholy instances, it is unnecessary to remark. We proceed, therefore, to lay down some principles, which, if we do not err in our statement of them, will be of some assistance in guiding us, in relation to this practical and important subject.

First.—The Holy Spirit is very various in his operations upon men; but it will be conceded, I suppose, as a correct principle, that He generally conforms himself in his operations, whatever they may be, to the structure and laws of the human mind. Accordingly in those operations, the object of which is to guide or direct men, it will be found, that He always acts in connection with the powers which are appropriate to such a result; and particularly in connection with the perceptive and judging powers. We desire it to be kept in mind, that we are speaking here of his directing or guiding operations; in other words, those, which have a special connection with human conduct. These are the operations, which most intimately concern us; and in regard to which it is most important to establish correct principles. We proceed to say, therefore, it is very obvious from man's mental structure, although he is sometimes the subject of a purely instinctive movement, that God designed, that the perceptive and judging powers, which He has given us, should ordinarily furnish the fundamental condition or basis of human action. And if in his spiritual providences it should be found to be his practice to guide men in any way not in accordance with this design, he would be inconsistent with himself. The first principle, therefore, which we lay down is this, that the Holy Spirit guides men, by operating in connection with the perceptive and judging powers.

And we may properly remark here, that this view, which is so important, as to be deserving of

the reflection of the most judicious persons, seems to be in accordance with the sentiments of the pious and learned John Howe. "We cannot" says this esteemed writer, "so much as apprehend clearly and with distinction the things which are needful for us to apprehend, *without the light of the Spirit of wisdom.* It is necessary, (viz. the light which the Spirit of wisdom gives,) in order to the act of distinguishing or discerning, between things, what is to be done, and what is not to be done. There is a continual need through the whole course of our spiritual life, for the using of such a discretive judgment between things and things. And in reference hereto, there needs a continual emanation of the Holy Ghost, for otherwise we put good for evil and evil for good; light for darkness and darkness for light. We need the Spirit's help, to shine with vigorous and powerful light into our minds, so as to bring our judgments to a right determination."

Second.—We may lay it down as another principle, that the Holy Spirit does not, either by his gentle influences or by those which are more sudden and powerful, so operate upon a person as to guide him into any course, which is truly irrational and absurd. Now we know in many cases, if we should yield to the direction of mere impressions and impulses, especially those which are of a powerful kind, we should be led to do those things, which, to whatever test or measurement they might be subjected, could not escape the denomination of irrationality or absurdity. Of such impulses the Ho-

ly Spirit can never be the author, because nothing which is really absurd and irrational, (we speak not of the mere *appearance*, but of the reality of absurdity,) can come from that source. I recollect once to have read the account of a person, published by himself, in which he gives the reader to understand, that on a certain occasion he was suddenly and violently seized by the power of God, as he expresses it; an expression undoubtly synonymous in the view of the writer with the power of the Holy Ghost; that he was raised up by this divine impulse from the chest on which he was sitting, and was "whirled swiftly round, like a top for the space of two hours, without the least pain or inconvenience." We do not see on what grounds such an extraordinary result as this, so unmeaning, so unprofitable and absurd, can properly be ascribed to the power of God or the power of the Holy Ghost; especially if it be susceptible of explanation on any natural principles. We know that the Savior was full of the Holy Ghost; but we do not read of his being subjected to any operation of this kind. We know also, that the Apostles, although they were plentifully endowed with the Divine Spirit, and under his teachings wrought various wonderful works, yet were never at any time made the subjects of such irrationalities. We have here, therefore, a mark of distinction, viz. that various irrational and absurd results may flow from natural impressions and impulses; but can never flow from the true operations of the Holy Spirit.

THIRD.—Actions, which proceed from pure im-

pulse or a mere internal impression without attendant perception or reflection, cannot possibly be holy actions. What we mean to say is, that there is a natural impossibility of their being such. A mere impulse, unattended by perception and reflection, is of the nature of an instinct. And any action, done from mere blind impulse, no matter how strong or extraordinary that impulse may be, is both physically and morally of the nature of an instinctive action. Now as it is universally conceded that purely instinctive actions have no moral character, it is entirely evident, that impulsive actions, which are of the same nature with instinctive actions, have no title to the denomination or character of holiness. Some persons seem to think, the more they act from impulse, especially powerful impulse, the more holy they are. But this, if we are correct in what has been said, is a great and dangerous mistake.

Fourth.—That the Holy Spirit does sometimes act directly upon the sensibilities by exciting in them a purely impulsive feeling, we may probably admit. Undoubtedly there are some facts, in the experience of pious men, which favor this view. But is it the object of the Holy Spirit, in originating impulsive impressions, to excite men to immediate action without any reflection, or to excite them to action rationally; that is to say, in connection with suitable inquiry and consideration? This is the important question. And the decision of it involves great practical results. It is certainly reasonable to suppose, that it is not the object of

the Holy Spirit, when He makes a direct impulsive impression on the human mind, to lead men to act without perception and reflection; but rather to stop them in their thoughtless and unreflecting career, and to awaken within them the slumbering powers of thought and inquiry. It is reasonable to suppose this, because as a wise being, as a being acting in accordance with the laws of the human mind, as a being infinitely desirous of true holiness in men, we do not well perceive, how He can take any other course than this. The true tendency, therefore, of those impressions or impulses, which come from the Spirit of God, is to awaken men to a sense of their thoughtlessness, and to quicken within them a state of humble and holy consideration. When such impressions and impulses are from the right source, we cannot doubt that the results will be of this character. That is to say; they will not of themselves lead men to direct action; but will lead them to that inquiry and reflection, which is preparatory to action. But when impressions or impulses come from Satan, as they sometimes do, their tendency is to lead men to action at once, without such intermediate consideration.

Fifth.—Those impulses and impressions, which are from the Spirit of God, are of a peaceful and gentle character. They never agitate and disturb the mind; but on the contrary, lay a wholesome restraint upon it; and hold it in a state of deep solemnity and of attentive stillness. This is the precise state of things, which is needed as prepar-

atory to the mind's perceptive and reflective action. The first question of the soul, when it is thus arrested by the true impulses of the Holy Spirit, is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" It pauses; it reflects; it inquires; it reads the Bible; it watches the Providences of God; it prays; it asks for the assistance of the Holy Spirit upon its perceptions and reasonings; and it dares not take one step to the right hand or to the left, until all its perceptive and reasoning powers have been exercised; and exercised too under the sanctifying guidance of the Holy Spirit. So that, although we may admit that there are sensitive impressions, and impulses, which are from the Holy Spirit; yet they are not of themselves, when they are really from that right and good source, guiding and controlling principles, but are merely preparatory to the action of such controlling principles, which are to be found in the intellective, rather than the sensitive part. And such impressions are to be known by the decisive mark or characteristic, which has now been given; viz. they are peaceable, holding the mind in a state of solemn and quiet attention.—Perhaps a simple illustration will make our meaning more readily understood. A person is at a particular time peculiarly impressed, that it is his duty to visit another person and converse with him on the subject of religion. If this impression is of divine origin, it will not violently agitate him; it will not lead him to action whether rationally or irrationally; it will not necessarily and absolutely compel him to

visit the person at once and without any intermediate exercise of the mind. It will lead him in the first instance, to reflect, to consider the suggested or impressed duty in various points of view, to mark the openings of God's Providence, and to pray that, in his reflections and inquiries in respect to duty, he may be guided by the Holy Spirit. In a word, the impression, which he has, prompts him, in the first instance, merely to make prayerful inquiry; but in his farther action he puts himself under the direction of a sanctified judgment; or if the expression be preferred, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost operating through the medium of a sanctified judgment. In accordance with these views, we find the following passage in the writings of Antonia Bourignon. "If the Holy Spirit inspires any thing, he will always give time to consult upon it with God."

Sixth.—Impressions and impulses, which are not from the Holy Spirit, but from some other source, such as a disordered imagination, the world, or the devil, are not of that peaceful and quiet character, which has been mentioned; but are hasty and violent. In violation of the great Scriptural maxim, "HE, THAT BELIEVETH, SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE," the person, who is under this pernicious influence, thinks he cannot be too quick. He makes but little account of obstacles; he cannot take time for interior examination; he has no open eye to God's outward providences; he is too impetuous, too much possessed by himself or by Satanic influence, to engage in calm and humble prayer for guidance; in

a word, he rushes blindly onward just as his great adversary, who is especially interested in his movements, would have him.

The great plea of these persons is, that the time is NOW; that what is to be done is to be done NOW; that the present moment is the true moment of action. This is essentially true; but there is a valuable remark of Fenelon, which places the doctrine of present or immediate action in its correct position. It is, that THE PRESENT MOMENT HAS A MORAL EXTENSION. In other words, we are undoubtedly bound to fulfil the duty of the present moment; but it is the present moment, not in a state of barren insulation, but considered in all its relations to God, man, and the universe. But it is perfectly obvious, that the duties of the present moment cannot be fulfilled in their moral extension, without calling in the aid of a calmly reflective and sanctified judgment.

SEVENTH.—When an action is performed, to which we are prompted by a gracious and not a mere natural or Satanic impulse, but which action is not attended with all those good results, which we expected and hoped, we are entirely acquiescent. We receive the result without trouble of mind. For instance, we are led in the providence of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to converse with a person on the subject of religion; and contrary to our hope and expectation, he coolly and superciliously rejects our message. The result, though painful, does not disquiet us. We leave it calmly in the hands of God. Whereas a

person, who performs an action from an impulse, which is not from the Spirit of God, and who finds the result different from what he expected, will be likely to experience a degree of unsubmissive dissatisfaction, and to show signs of fretfulness. And I think it a matter of common observation, that Christians, who are governed in a considerable degree by natural or any other impulses not divine, mistaking them for a truly spiritual guidance, are, to use the common expression in the case, "always in trouble;"—sometimes with the church; sometimes with their minister; sometimes with one thing, and sometimes with another; and alas, not unfrequently, although they seem to be wholly unaware of it, with the holy Providences of God himself. They are not childlike, and meek, and lowly in heart; as those always are, who are truly guided by the Holy Spirit. They are not like the Savior, who, when he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Eighth.—We are continually taught by good men and in the Bible, that we ought to be like our Heavenly Father, to be holy as he is holy, to be perfect as he is perfect. And I suppose it is the general design and aim of Christians, who are striving after high attainments in holiness, to bear this blessed image. But probably we do not any of us conceive of God as acting impulsively and without reflection; as regulating his conduct by the stupid instinct of impressions, without the clear light of perceptive rationality. We should be deeply af-

flicted and affrighted, in being obliged to ascribe to our Heavenly Father such a character as this. Similar views will apply to the Savior. He himself says, John 5 : 30, "I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge; [that is to say, the communications of the Holy Spirit call my judgment into exercise,] and my judgment is just, because, [implying in the remark that he was uninfluenced by any suggestions and impressions from self,] I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me." Are we not safe, then, if God desires and requires us to be like himself, and to be like him also, whom in the likeness of man He has set before us as our example, in saying, that a judgment, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is the true guide of our actions, rather than blind impulses and impressions?

It will be recollected, that we do not absolutely deny the occasional existence of impulses and impressions, resulting from the operations of the Spirit of God. But we cannot well avoid the conclusion, that they are entitled to no influence, and are not designed to have any, except in connection with the subsequent action of an awakened and sanctified judgment. And it is this view only, which can rescue them from the imputation of blindness and irrationality, even when they come from a good and right source. When, therefore, we speak of them as blind and irrational, we wish to be understood as speaking of them, as they are in themselves, and without being enlightened by the subsequent action of a sanctified intellect. The

subsequent action of the mind, which may always be expected to follow when they come from the Holy Spirit, cannot fail to impart to them a new and interesting character.

In conclusion we would remark, that the doctrine of present sanctification has much to fear from not accurately distinguishing natural and Satanic impulses from the true movings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Many, who ran well for a time, but who afterwards yielded themselves to impulsive influences which were not from the Spirit of God, have wandered into perplexed and divergent paths, to the injury of the cause of holiness and of their own souls. And we would just remark here, that the most interesting and satisfactory illustrations of holy living, which have come under our notice, are the cases of persons, who endeavor constantly to put themselves under the direction of a sanctified intellect; who are willing to do any thing and every thing for the glory of God; but who feel that they need and must have wisdom. These persons can testify, that they are guided by the Holy Spirit; but they can testify also, that the Holy Spirit does not require them to do any thing, which an enlightened and sanctified intellect does not appreciate and approve. And hence their course is marked by consistency and sound discretion. They are not different men at different times, on whom no dependence can be placed. They are always at their post; supporters of the ministry; pillars in the church; patient under opposition and rebuke; faithful in warning sinners; counsellors

in times of difficulty; mighty in the Scriptures; burning and shining lights in the world. It is such persons, that truly sustain and honor the blessed doctrine of Holiness; presenting before the world the mighty argument of consistent holy living, which unbelievers cannot confute, and which the wicked and the envious are unable to gainsay.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHTH.

On the grace of Silence as a means of sustaining a Holy Life.

The regulation of the tongue has a close connection, perhaps more so than is generally imagined, with the permanent support of the interior life.

In the first place, a great freedom in the use of the tongue, an incontinence of speech, if we may so express it, necessarily involves a loss of time. When people meet together, as they generally do, without recollection in God, how many things are said, which are obviously unprofitable; but which, nevertheless, do not occupy less time, on account of their inutility. It was one of the rules of conduct, laid down by that devoted servant of God, Herman Franke, "not to make the things of this

world a subject of conversation, except when God may be honored, or good done to our neighbor thereby." The application of some rule of this kind to the conversation of the great mass of Christians, would undoubtedly show, that much of it neither honors God nor benefits their neighbor; and that, consequently, the precious time, which it requires, is lost. But he, who is fully resolved to walk in holiness before the Lord, cannot deliberately waste his time. It is a precious deposit, which his heavenly Father has committed to his trust; and for which he is responsible. We repeat, therefore, that a holy person cannot deliberately waste it; and consequently he will feel constrained by the most serious reasons, to refrain from frivolous and useless conversation.

(2.)—But this is not all. We remark, in the second place, that it is almost impossible to speak much, without saying that, which is positively injurious, as well as unprofitable. It would be unreasonable to expect to indulge freely in conversation with others, in the manner in which men commonly do, without conforming, in part at least, to their own views and terms of social intercourse. In other words, we seem to be under the necessity of sympathizing, to some extent, with their trains of thought and experience; and are not at liberty wholly to reject subjects, which are pleasing to them. And who does not know, that, acting on this view, we are often introduced to various topics, which, both in their nature and tendency, are exceedingly remote from a religious and edifying

character. How large a portion, for instance, of the conversation of the great mass of mankind is taken up with censorious and unfavorable comments on the conduct of their neighbors. How much there is of expressed or hinted suspicion! How much of back-biting and slander! Now, if we would not be accessory to sins of this kind, we must learn the difficult art of controlling the tongue, and of forming habits of conscientious silence.

(3.)—Again, too much conversation has an injurious effect upon the religious interests of the mind, in addition to what has already been said, by filling the soul with many vain and useless thoughts. All such thoughts take up more or less of the mind's attention; and just so far as it is so occupied, it is necessarily deprived of the consciousness of God's sweet and purifying presence. Such are the laws of the mind, that it cannot possibly be occupied with God and a multitude of worldly vanities at the same time. And in addition to this, it should be remembered, that words are one of the outward signs and natural expressions of the inward passions; and that the passions generally gain strength by being outwardly expressed. This is especially the case with the angry passions. On the contrary, they generally wither and die under a system of repression and silence. So that by maintaining a judicious practice of silence, we shall not only find our thoughts less liable to wander and more collected in God, than they would otherwise be; but shall also find the exciting passions, when thus deprived of the powerful stimulation of words,

more submissive, and more perfectly under control.

(4.)—Again, outward silence favors inward silence. In other words, it promotes inward and spiritual REST; a cessation from that inordinate and grasping activity, which is prompted by the life of nature. This is involved, in part, in what has already been said; but it is worthy of a distinct and particular notice. The utterance of words necessarily connects us with things outward to ourselves; and sometimes implicates us very strongly with scenes, transactions, and interests of an external and generally of a worldly character. But the natural and almost necessary result of outward silence is the retrocession of the soul into itself, and, in general, a decided tendency to the resumption of inward peace. And this state of things, as we have already had occasion to notice, is favorable to the entrance, in-dwellings, and operations of the Holy Spirit. It is in such a soul much more than in others, that the great Comforter and Teacher loves to take up his residence and to expand his benign influences. "As much as lies in thy power," says the devout Kempis, "shun the resorts of worldly men; for much conversation on worldly business, however innocently managed, greatly retards the progress of the spiritual life. We are soon captivated by vain objects, and employments, and soon defiled. And I have wished a thousand times, that I had either not been in company or had been silent."

(5.)—It should also have great weight with us, that the Scriptures impart so much instruction on

this subject. So liable are we to offend in the use of the tongue, and so difficult is it to regulate ourselves in this respect, that we are told by the Apostle James, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." In Proverbs also, 21 : 23, it is said, "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." There are other passages of similar import; but how little, notwithstanding, is the importance of properly regulating our speech realized. Some persons, even some Christians, seem to think, (if we may be allowed to judge from their conduct,) that crime may attach to almost any form of human action but this. Oh, that they would remember the words of the Savior; words, which should be engraven upon the heart of every one, who aims at holiness! "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words shalt thou be condemned."

But some will perhaps inquire, whether we may not converse much, if our object be to do good. I admit that we may, if we can do more good in this way, including what we owe to ourselves as well as what we owe to others, than we can by a judicious mixture of conversation and silence. But then we should consider, that we cannot reasonably expect to do much good, without a heart richly replenished with divine grace. And I believe it is a common opinion, that the disbursements of frequent talking, without the incomes of a prayerful

silence, generally result, and very rapidly too, in the evaporation and loss of the inward life. And accordingly it is a frequent saying, that a man may, in a modified sense of the expressions, "talk away his religion." And it may be added further, as in accordance with what has now been said, that pious ministers not unfrequently lament, that calls for outward action and for much speaking to others leave them too little time for interior retirement, and for seasons of spiritual refreshment and advancement, by communication with the Everlasting Fountain.

In connection with the subject, we proceed to make a few brief practical remarks. And the first, which we have to make, relates to the manner of our conversation, viz. We should make it a general rule to avoid expressing ourselves in a very emphatic and passionate manner, and with a high tone of voice. It is well understood, that such a method of outward expression reacts upon the mind, and has a tendency to produce an excited and inordinate state of the feelings within. And besides, it is generally unpleasant and unprofitable to the hearers. It will be noticed, that we are not speaking here of public occasions, in respect to which the rule must be adopted with its appropriate restrictions, but of conversation. And I think we may profitably add here, that the rule is capable of some extension. A truly consecrated person will not only be characterized by quietness of manner, so far as words and voice are concerned; but also in other outward respects. His counten-

ance, his action, his general movement will be pervaded, in a great measure, by the same beautiful and Christ-like trait.

Another remark is, that we should be careful not to speak much of ourselves and of our own affairs. There are undoubtedly some exceptions to this view; especially when suitable opportunities present themselves of speaking of God's dealings with our souls. But, nevertheless, this seems to be the correct general rule. Such conversations, viz. those which turn frequently and almost exclusively upon ourselves, besides not being in general edifying to others, are apt, by directing our thoughts from the glory of God to the persons and the affairs of the creature, to reanimate and strengthen the dying life of self.

Again, it is not religiously profitable to make the persons and concerns of our *neighbors* the frequent subjects of our discourse, unless it be for the purpose of saying what we know can properly be said in their favor, of vindicating them against aspersions, or for some other good and charitable purpose. This rule too has, in practice, its appropriate limitations, which a judicious piety will be likely to suggest.

The only further practical remark, which we wish to make on this subject at present, is, that, when we are falsely spoken against, or in some other way greatly injured, we should not, as a general rule, be hasty to reply. The life of nature would prompt us to reply quickly, to vindicate ourselves at all hazards; and sometimes perhaps

with a considerable degree of sharpness and violence. But the gentle spirit of Christ in the soul, which says, "without my Father I can do nothing," always leads us to look to God for aid and direction, before we look to ourselves and our own wisdom, or to the precipitate help of earthly friends. It was thus with the prophet Daniel. When misrepresented, injured, and persecuted, he at once turned his thoughts to God as his only protection. In his solitary chamber, kneeling before the face of the Infinite Presence, and with no disposition to look any where else, he entrusted his cause to Him, who alone is able to help. The example of the Savior also, in relation to this subject, is particularly instructive. When brought to trial before Pilate, although he could easily have made a defence, he chose to be silent; "he answered him to *never a word*, in so much that the Governor marvelled greatly." In the language of the evangelical prophet, "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."—The deep grace, which manifests itself by patience and silence under the circumstances which have been mentioned, will plead far more eloquently in our behalf, than all the torrent of words and all the vivacity of effort, which the life of nature is so ready to pour forth.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINTH.

On the true idea of interior annihilation or nothingness.

When we use the phrase "interior annihilation," we of course use it in a mitigated or qualified sense, as meaning not an entire extinction of any principles within us, but only an extinction of certain irregularities of their action. In other words, it is not an absolute annihilation; but only the annihilation of any thing and every thing which is wrong; the annihilation of what the Scriptures call the "old man," in distinction from the "new man, created anew in Christ Jesus." Perhaps we should not refer to this form of expression at all, nor make any remarks upon it, although it is sometimes a convenient one in the description of internal experience, were it not that it is often employed, or some phrase of equivalent import, in writers, particularly those of an ancient date, on the interior religious life. I believe, also, it is quite common among many Christians at the present time, to speak in rather a loose way of their Nothingness, of the importance of feeling that they are Nothing, and the like; which shows that this form of expression indicates the existence of some great

practical truth, although it may be but indistinctly developed, which is clear to the religious mind. We shall give our ideas on this subject, as plainly and concisely as we can.

First.—The state of inward annihilation is characterized, in the first place, by the extinction of all unregulated or unsanctified love of created things, or "love of the creatures," as it is sometimes expressed. Accordingly, we cannot say that a person is interiorly lost or annihilated, who is in any degree the slave of his appetites. The action of the appetites, when directed to their original objects, and when subjected to the regulation of a purified conscience, is undoubtedly consistent with this state: that is to say, when they are exercised, not from a view to the mere pleasure which they afford, but in accordance with their primitive constitution, and consequently in accordance with the will of God. But he, who takes delight in the pleasures of the senses, and indulges the lower appetites of our nature, that the attendant pleasures, rather than the original objects of the senses may be realized, has not so crucified and slain himself, that he can be said to be inwardly annihilated. There is still within himself the germination and the growth of that form of selfish gratification, which may properly be called a "love of the creatures."

A similar statement may be made in regard to those principles, which are understood to be higher in rank than the Appetites; and which, in order to distinguish them from the lower or ap-

petitive part of our nature, may properly be denominated the Propensities and the Affections; such as the social propensity, the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, the filial affection, the parental affection, friendship, and the love of country. If these propensive principles and affections, whatever comparative rank they may sustain, are not perfectly subordinated to the principle of supreme love to God, if they exist in such a degree as to be in conflict with what the law of God requires, then it is very clear that the state of mind does not exist, which, in the language of religious experience, is denominated "interior annihilation." There is still a vigorous portion of the life of the "old man," which has not been slain. And hence it is, that we lay down the extinction of the love of created things or "love of the creatures," with the explanation and illustration of the meaning of the terms just given, as one of the characteristics of the state of mind under consideration. Of a person, who is thus interiorly annihilated, it can be truly said, "he is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him."

Second.—Another mark or characteristic of that state of mind, which is described as interior annihilation, is *the extinction of self-will.* He, who is annihilated and lost to himself, has no will of his own. We ought to remark here, that, when we speak of the extinction of inordinate creature love and of self-will, we do not mean to imply, that the mind is rendered naturally or physically incapable of such irregular exercises. But merely that the

work of grace on the heart has been so deep, that there is, at the present time, a practical extinction of all such wrong internal acts. We are no longer troubled with them. Acting from supreme love to God has become the confirmed principle and habit of the mind; so that sensual pleasure, and worldly applause, and private ends of whatever kind, have lost their power. We have no pleasure of our own; we have no desires of our own; we have no will of our own. Under all circumstances, rejecting all wisdom and all plans originating in ourselves, our inquiry is "What wilt *thou* have me to do?" "God within us," the divine image, living operatively in the soul, is the all-powerful and absorbing principle.

THIRD.—The state of interior nothingness is characterized, further, by the extinction of the power of antecedent evil habits. A person may be sanctified to God, his heart may be pure in the divine sight, and still there may be a constant struggle on the part of the "old man" or the "old nature," to regain possession. It is difficult to explain this, viz. that a truly holy heart may still have a struggle antagonistical to sin, and oftentimes a fearful struggle; but it is probably owing, in addition to the direct temptations of Satan, to the tremendous power of antecedent evil habits. The principle of self-love, for instance, may by divine grace be redeemed from its selfish attitude, and may be brought to its true subjective position and become a holy principle; and yet, in consequence of its previous habits of inordinate exercise, there

may be a strong tendency, which requires constant resistance, to resume its former position of irregularity and sin. This tendency is not, properly speaking, in the principle itself; but is forced upon it *exteriorly*, if we may so express it, by the law of habit; and therefore, although it is extremely dangerous, it does not appear to be necessarily sinful. The idea may here perhaps be illustrated in the case of the reformed inebriate. He has refrained from drinking; but the influence of the antecedent law of habit is still felt in his system. He is no longer guilty of the sin of drinking; but his liability to fall into this sin is greatly increased by his antecedent evil habit. There is, undoubtedly, something mysterious in this; but it seems, nevertheless, to be true. He feels that, in consequence of his former evil habits, the enemy is near at hand and in great power; that his danger is thereby increased, and that he must always be in the attitude of watchfulness and of resistance. Something like this is the case with those, who have just entered into that state, where they can say, they "love the Lord with all their heart." The enemy is cast out; but he avails himself of the influence of the law of habit, to take a hostile attitude and to seek a re-entrance.

Now when a person has experienced the state of interior nothingness, as it is conveniently, perhaps, and yet not accurately termed, he has, by divine grace, not only succeeded in conquering sin in the gigantic forms of creature-love and of self-will, but in breaking down the perplexing influ-

ence and the unfavorable tendency of former habits. And hence there is a vast accession to his power, and to his tendency to union with God. Satan himself, in the presentation of his temptations, has comparatively but little influence over such a soul. He has, comparatively speaking, no basis to operate upon, no way of secret, circuitous, and indirect attack; but must come boldly up and make his attack, face to face, as he did in his temptation of the blessed Savior. And this he would rather not do, if he can approach the object of his attack in some other way.

Fourth.—It is a further characteristic of the mental state, which we are considering, that a person in this state of mind has no disposition to exercise self-reflecting acts, originating either in undue self-love or in a want of faith. What I mean to say is, that, when he has done his duty, he no longer turns back upon himself and asks, as the half-way Christian often does, What does the world think of me? Divested of all selfish purposes and aims, and having no will of his own, he acts deliberately and supremely for God; and therefore he feels that whatever is done, so far as motives and intentions are concerned, is well done. In that respect no trouble enters his mind. There is no need of retrospection; no need of apologies to cavillers. Indeed, he can scarcely be said to exercise retrospective acts and reflections upon himself in any sense whatever. Such acts seem to be, to some extent, inconsistent with the fact, that his heart is fixed exclusively upon an object

out of himself. (What is done stands written in the record of his Divine Master; and there he leaves it. His whole soul is given to the present moment. The present moment is given to God.)

Fifth.—Another and remarkable characteristic of this state of mind is this. He, who is the subject of it, is dead and crucified to all internal joys also, as well as to all pleasures and joys of an external kind. He has no sympathy with those, who are always crying, "Make me happy." "Pay me well, and I will be holy." Personal happiness, as a supreme or even a separate object of desire, never enters his thought. It makes no difference what the form of that happiness is, whether pleasures of the senses or pleasures of the mind. He is willing to abandon and sacrifice even the pure and sublime pleasure, almost the only consolation left to him in this sad world, which flows from communion with those, who, like himself, are sanctified to God. His true happiness consists in hanging upon the Cross, and in being crucified to self. Whether he is tempted or not tempted, interiorly and in the bottom of his heart he can say, all is well. (Whether he suffers or does not suffer, the throne of peace is erected in the centre of his soul.) Wretchedness and joy are alike. He welcomes sorrow, even the deepest sorrow of the heart, with as warm a gush of gratitude as he welcomes happiness, if the will of God is accomplished. (In that will his soul is lost, as in a bottomless ocean.)

Accordingly, it will not be surprising, when we say further, that he makes but little account of

aptures, visions, extacies, special illuminations, sudden and remarkable impressions, or any thing of the kind, except so far as they tend, which, alas, s frequently not the case, to extinguish self, and o lead the soul into the abyss of the supreme Divinity.

Finally.—The soul, that has reached the centre of its Nothing, (that is, is absolutely and forever nothing relatively to *self*,) remains without resistance in the hands of God, like clay in the hands of the potter. It has become perfectly pliable and impressible to the divine touch. Such a soul is peculiarly the subject of that ennobling form of prayer, which is called in certain writers the Receptive or Passive Prayer. Entirely divested of those habits of self-activity, which are so common and so injurious, it remains quiet and childlike in the divine presence. Like the placid lake, that receives and reflects to the eye of the beholder the image of trees and flowers on its banks, returning image for image, without a stem disarranged, or a petal broken; so in all the hidden aspirations which it constantly sends forth, it passively and almost unconsciously receives and reflects the image of God; an image, which is not distorted by the mixture of self-originated acts, nor marred by the disturbing power of internal agitation. God loves to leave the impress of his blessed image on the self-annihilated soul. And the prayer which it breathes, as it is not self-moved, but moves as it is moved upon, may truly be regarded as the praying breath of the Holy Spirit, who always dwells in the soul that knows itself no more.

We may see, therefore, how strong must be the position of the Divine Mind, (the DEUS AGENS INTER, as it has been expressed in the Latin,) in the self-annihilated soul. A soul, in the language of Michael de Molinos, "desiring as if it did not desire; willing as if it did not will; understanding as if it did not understand; thinking as if it did not think, without inclining to any thing; [that is, independently of the will of God;] embracing equally contempts and honors, benefits and corrections. Oh, what a happy soul is this, which is thus dead and annihilated. It lives no longer in itself, because God lives in it. And now it may most truly be said of it, that it is a renewed Phœnix, because it is changed, spiritualized, and transformed into the divine image."

And again, he says, "We seek ourselves every time we get out of our Nothing; and, therefore, we never get to quiet and perfect contemplation. Creep in, as far as ever thou canst, into the truth of thy Nothing; and then nothing will disquiet thee; nay, thou wilt be humble and ashamed, losing openly thy own reputation and esteem.)

"Oh, what a strong bulwark wilt thou find of that Nothing! Who can ever afflict thee, if thou dost once retire into that fortress! Because the soul, which is despised by itself, and in its own knowledge is nothing, is not capable of receiving grievance or injury from any body. The soul, which keeps within its Nothingness, is internally silent, lives resigned in any torment whatsoever, by thinking it less than it doth deserve; is free

from abundance of imperfections, and becomes commander of great virtues. While the soul keeps still and quiet in its Nothingness, THE LORD DRAWS HIS OWN IMAGE AND LIKENESS IN IT, WITHOUT ANY THING TO HINDER IT."*

* See the work, entitled, "Abstract of the Spiritual Guide of Michael de Molinos." Chaps. XIX, XX.

Oh, sacred union with the Perfect Mind!
Transcendent bliss, which Thou alone canst give!
How blest are they, this pearl of price who find,
And dead to earth, have learnt in Thee to live.

Thus, in thine arms of love, Oh God, I lie,
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee.
My happy soul, since it hath learnt to die,
Hath found new life in thine Infinity.

Oh, go, and learn this lesson of the Cross;
And tread the way, which saints and prophets trod,
Who, counting life, and self, and all things loss,
Have found, in inward death, the life of God.

CHAPTER FORTIETH.

On the state of union with God.

Among the higher forms of Christian experience, as we find them described by writers on experimental religion, there is a state of mind, which we find denominated the state of UNION. It is also frequently called, by a phrase which intimates the same thing, the UNITIVE state of mind.—This state of mind is not unfrequently implied and even described by devout writers, without a formal mention of it by name. Archbishop Leighton, for instance, speaks of the Christian, who perceives himself "knit to God, and his soul more fast and joined nearer to him than to his own body." The following prayer is ascribed to John Climacus, many centuries since a devout and learned recluse of Mount Sinai. "My God, I pretend to nothing upon this earth, except to be so firmly UNITED to Thee by prayer, that to be separated from Thee may be impossible. Let others desire riches and glory; for my part I desire but one thing, and that is to be inseparably UNITED to Thee, and to place in Thee alone all my hopes of happiness and repose." These expressions indicate a full belief,

on the part of this devout person, of the existence of the state of present mental union with God, as well as earnest desire for it. There are repeated allusions to this state of mind in the works of Kempis and Tauler; writers, who, although Catholics, are favorably mentioned by Luther; and have always been much esteemed by Protestant christians. Sir Henry Vane, one of the English Puritans, a man religiously as well as politically memorable, wrote a religious treatise, which in part had express relation to this subject, entitled, ON THE LOVE OF GOD, AND UNION WITH GOD. Many pious persons in more modern times, and in different denominations of Christians, have spoken very emphatically of their union with the Divine Mind; and in such way as to leave the impression, that they considered the state of union as a distinct and peculiar, as well as a very desirable and eminent modification of Christian experience. "Time would fail me," says Lady Maxwell, "to tell of the numberless manifestations of divine love and power. I have, though deeply unworthy, been favored with such wonderful lettings into Deity, as no language can describe or explain; but the whole soul dilates itself in the exquisite enjoyment; so refined, so pure, so tempered with sacred awe, so guarded by heavenly solemnity, as effectually to prevent all irregularity of desires. These, with every power of the mind, bow in holy subjection before Jehovah. Surely the feelings of the soul, on these memorable occasions, are nearly similar to those enjoyed by the heavenly inhabitants. I

have it still to remark, that all my intercourse with God the Father is strongly marked with that superior solemnity and awe which lay and keep the soul in the dust, yet raised to that holy dignity, which flows from a *consciousness of union with the Deity.*"

First.—Proceeding now to make a few general remarks in explanation of the subject, we observe, in the first place, that the name, unitive state or state of divine union, is derived from the peculiar state of mind, which exists. The precise state of the soul, stated in general terms, seems to be one of close and ineffable conformity with the Divine Mind. It is called the state of union, therefore, simply because it is such. We cannot help regarding this state of mind, if it be rightly understood, as a scriptural one. Is it too much to say, that there is a recognition of it, in those remarkable and to some persons inexplicable passages, which are found in the latter part of John's Gospel? Passages which, however mysterious they may appear to many at the present time, have nevertheless a real meaning; and as the church advances in holiness, will undoubtedly be made clear and full of import, in connection with the personal experience of multitudes. "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word. That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe, that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even

AS WE ARE ONE. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE; and that the world may know, that thou hast sent me; and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John, 17 : 20—23.

SECOND.—The following principle appears to lay at the foundation of the doctrine of DIVINE UNION, as we find it represented in various writers, viz. That all moral and accountable beings, just in proportion as they are freed from the dominion of sin, have a natural and inherent tendency to unite with God. Of the correctness of this principle, when properly understood, there does not appear to be any reasonable doubt. It is nothing more nor less than this, that holy beings recognize in each other a mutual relationship of character, and are led, by the very necessities of their nature, to seek each other in the reciprocal exercise of love. In other words, nothing appears to them so exceedingly good, desirable, and lovely as holiness, whenever and wherever found. Accordingly, just as soon as we feel, that our sins are pardoned, and have an inward consciousness, that faith in Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," is working by love and purifying the heart, we begin to feel also a secret union with the Savior, not only as our atoning sacrifice, but as a *holy* being, and as a true representative of the Divinity in the flesh. And just in proportion as we grow in grace and become free from sin, we shall find this state of union with the Savior increasing. And union with Christ, (a real union such as that of the branch, when

it is united to the vine,) is followed, in the natural progress of the religious life, by union, through Christ and in Christ, with God the Father; in accordance with the remarkable prayer of the Savior, which has already been referred to, "that they all may be ONE; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US." And it is in accordance with this view, that Lady Maxwell, whose religious experience, especially in the latter part of her life, is exceedingly interesting and instructive, remarks in expressions, which convey an important truth, though perhaps liable to be misunderstood, "*Jehovah teaches and enables me to pass through Jesus, as the way to himself.*" In a single word, union, (whether we look at the subject in the light of nature or in the light of God's word,) union, pure, strong, inseparable, and without regard to natural or physical differences, is the one great and necessary law of holy beings. Hence the doctrine of Cudworth, which has already been spoken of, that a holy soul can no more be separated from God, and retain its inward and holy life, than a sunbeam can be separated from the sun, and retain its heat and brightness. Just in proportion as our sin is taken away, the element of separation is taken away; and the soul, delivered from the clogs which fastened it to that which is not God, returns instinctively and unerringly to the Infinite Centre.

THIRD.—We remark again, in the third place, that union with God, considered as a form of christian experience, is not a physical union, an

union of essence with essence physically, but a moral and religious union. It would hardly be necessary to make this remark, were it not, that some pious writers on this subject make use of strong expressions, which may be easily misunderstood and misapplied, but which obviously were not designed to be, and ought not to be taken in their physical or literal import. The passages of Scripture, which recognize and which require the union of the regenerated mind of man with the mind of of his Maker, or with the mind of Christ, are in some instances exceedingly strong, and seem to require a modified interpretation. All that is necessary is, that we should exhibit in other cases the discrimination and candor, which generally characterize our interpretations of the Scriptures. But, although we are not to understand from the language of the writers on this subject, that there is a physical union, or a union which would imply in any sense the loss of our own personality and accountability, they undoubtedly mean to teach the existence and the reality of a moral and religious union, as close and intimate as such an union possibly can be; an union entirely analogous, in all probability, to that pure and blessed union, which existed between Christ Jesus, considered in his human nature, and his heavenly Father.

Fourth.—The existence of the unitive state does not necessarily imply inward manifestations and raptures of an extraordinary kind. On the contrary, such manifestations, and joys and raptures of a remarkable character, which would be likely to

attract attention to themselves as distinct objects of notice, and thus nourish the life of Self, would be unfavorable, rather than otherwise, to the existence of the state of mind under consideration. This state of mind implies, however, the existence, in the highest degree, of those two great elements of the religious life, to which the reader's attention has been repeatedly called, viz. Consecration, which separates us from every known sin and lays all upon the altar of God as a perpetual sacrifice; and Faith, which leaves all in God's hands, and which receives and accepts no wisdom, no goodness, no strength, but what comes from God as the true source of inward and everlasting life. Consecration renounces the ALL of the creature; faith recognizes and accepts the ALL of God. Consecration implies the rejection and hatred of all evil; faith implies the reception and love of all good. The one alienates, abhors, and tramples under foot all unsanctified natural desires, aims, and purposes; the other approves, receives, and makes a part of its own self, all the desires, aims, and purposes of God; and both are implied and involved, and are carried to their highest possible exercise, in the state of divine union.

FIFTH.—The mind, in the state of union with God, is disposed to indulge in subdued and affectionate acts of contemplation, rather than in examinative and discursive or reasoning acts. It is undoubtedly the case, that the mind may remain fixed upon God and may be in a certain sense united to him, in what may variously be called a

perceptive, reflective, or discursive manner; that is to say, engaged in a perceptive or speculative view of him, occupied in the critical examination of his various attributes, his justice, wisdom, and goodness, or something of the kind. But something more than this kind of union is implied in the state of mind, which we are now speaking of. The examinative or discursive state of the mind implies the presence of God to the intellect merely; the contemplative state, although not altogether excluding an intellectual view, implies his presence to the heart. And it is on this ground that we make the remark, that the mind, in the state of divine union, is rather contemplative, than perceptive and examinative.

I have sometimes supposed, that something like the unitive state of mind, which it is so difficult to describe, might perhaps exist in the case of a blind child, who has an attentive and affectionate father. The child, being blind from birth, has visually and perceptively no distinct knowledge of his father. But he knows there is an object present to him though unseen; and that this outward and unseen being is ever beneficent and ever active in securing his happiness. He has but an indefinite and obscure notion of his form; and is not capable of any accurate analysis of his character; but his mind rests in the general complex idea of an ever present being; who, although he is unseen, and in many of his attributes is essentially unknown, is nevertheless the precise object, which of all others is the most fitted to secure, and is the most worthy

of his love. It is thus, contemplatively rather than discursively, that his father is ever present to his thoughts, and is ever the object of his almost adoring affections.

Sixth.—The state of divine union may exist under two modifications; the one characterized by our being distinctly conscious of its existence, the other without such consciousness. The union of the human with the divine mind, when it is once originated, is not easily broken. The fact, for instance of our being taken up at times with indispensable worldly cares, does not necessarily destroy the state of union, although we may not be distinctly percipient or conscious of it at such times. But what we wish to remark here is, that the state in question, whenever it is the subject of distinct inward notice or consciousness, seems to be characterized, among other marks, by a tendency, not only to inward contemplation, but to outward silence. At such times the soul appears to know but one object, and that is God; and to have but one feeling, and that is love. It is drawn inwardly; and outward objects seem to have but little influence. Hence words are few. It has but little disposition to express even what itself feels. In fact, the conversation, which is carried on at such times between the soul and God is too high for human language; and what is more, it is carried on with a Being, who can understand the soul's meaning without the medium of human speech. The conversation is with God, and not with men; and is in God's manner and not after the manner of men; and, therefore, it would be

difficult to repeat it, even if there were a disposition to do it. The soul, in its attitude of serene and fixed contemplation, continually but *silently* repeats to itself sentiments of trust and adoration, of gratitude and love. God recognizes the import of this hidden language and returns it, by condescendingly unveiling himself in his amiableness and benevolence. There is a constant flowing and re-flowing of affection; love ascending to God and love returning; so that there is not only a consciousness of love to God on the part of the person; but what is yet more striking, there is a consciousness, or rather a deeply wrought conviction, that God loves him in return. He can say in the beautiful expressions of the Canticles, "Thou dost place thy left hand under my head and with thy right hand Thou dost embrace me; and thy banner over me is love."

Seventh.—It is very obvious, that this state of mind cannot be fully understood, except in connection with inward experience. In the language of the author of the Life of Sir Henry Vane, "Divine life must have divine words; words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, to give its own character."* Therefore we will not attempt to pursue the topic any further than to say, that the state of union with God, when it is the subject of distinct consciousness, constitutes, without being necessarily characterized by revelations or raptures, the soul's spiritual festival, a season of special interior blessedness, a foretaste of heaven. The mind, unaffected by worldly vicissitudes and the strifes and

* Life of Sir Henry Vane, anonymous, printed in 1662.

oppositions of men, reposes deeply in a state of happy submission and quietude, in accordance with the expressions in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that those who believe, "ENTER INTO REST." So true it is in the language of Kempis, that "he, who comprehendeth all things in His will, and beholdeth all things in His light, hath his *heart fixed*, and abideth in the peace of God." How can there be otherwise than the peace of God, pure, beautiful, sublime, when consecration is without reserve and faith is without limit; and especially, when self-will, the great evil of our fallen nature, is eradicated and subdued. What higher idea can we have of the most advanced christian experience, than that of entire union with the divine will, by a subjection of the human will? When the will of man, ceasing from its divergencies and its disorderly vibrations, becomes fixed to one point, henceforward immovable, always harmonizing, moment by moment, with God's central and absorbing purposes, then we may certainly say, that the soul, in the language which is sometimes applied to it, and in a modified sense of the terms, has become not only perfected in faith and love, but "united and one with God," and "transformed into the divine nature."—"*He, that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.*" And from that moment, in its higher nature, and so far as it is not linked to earth by sympathies, which its God has implanted, and which were smitten and bled even in the case of the Savior, the soul knows sorrow no more; the pain of its inward anguish is changed into rejoicing; it has

passed into the mount of stillness, the Tabor of inward transfiguration, the Temple of unchanging tranquillity.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIRST.

On varieties of Christian Character.

Much more might, undoubtedly, be said on the interesting and important subjects, to which our attention has been directed. But we leave them, for the present, to the serious reflections and the examination of others, with a few additional remarks in illustration of some varieties of christian character.

First.—There are three classes of Christians, who seem to be easily distinguishable from each other. The first class are those, who, destitute, in a considerable degree, of any marked spiritual manifestations and joys, may yet be said to possess faith. And in the possession of faith they undoubtedly have the effective element of the inward life. Their faith, however, is weak. Their language is, "Lord, I *believe*, help Thou mine *unbelief*." They have but little strength. In general, they move feebly and slowly; and in some instances scarcely

show signs of life. Some, however, exhibit a little more strength and activity than others; and God honors them by employing them in the smaller charges and duties of his Church. These cases are not without their encouragement. Such persons are often characterized by the trait of humble perseverance. They grow in grace, though not rapidly; and not unfrequently become strong in the end. As a general statement, they have not much to say in any period of their experience; but they are not wanting in sincerity, and they cling to the cross of Christ, as the foundation of their hope. It is seldom that they make a strong impression upon the world; but their example is generally salutary. These are not those, who have been caught up to the "third heavens," and have seen wonderful things.

Second.—The second class are those, who have had striking manifestations, in the way of strong convictions and of subsequent great illuminations. From time to time, a remarkable impulse, a divine *afflatus*, if we may so express it, seems to come upon them, and they are borne on in a gale. Then comes a calm; and they temporarily make but little progress. Sometimes they have great darkness; but it is alternated with gleams of light. Nor is the light, which they have, always the pure and calm light, which is of a heavenly origin; but sometimes the red, meteor-like glare of an earthly fire. They may be said to have a considerable degree of faith; but they evidently have less faith than *feeling*. Their mental history, however, under its various

changes, partakes, in no small degree, of the striking, the marvellous. These persons are generally the marked ones, the particular and bright stars in the Church. They often have great gifts; they labor for God; they attract attention. They overwhelm by their eloquence; startle by their new and sometimes heretical views; are denunciatory, argumentative, prophetic, just as the occasion may call. But their movements are not always clear of Self; and pride sometimes lurks at the bottom. They are "many men in one;" without true fixedness and simplicity of character; but exhibiting themselves in different aspects, according as the natural or the spiritual life predominates. Sometimes they are sunk deep in their own nothingness through the influence of the Spirit of God; and sometimes they are up in the "airy mind" of nature's "inflatibility". They are undoubtedly very useful; aiding themselves in the things of religion and aiding others; but it can hardly be said of them, that *their life is hid with Christ in God.* They think too much of their own efforts and powers; they place too high an estimate on human instrumentality; they do not fully understand the secret of their own nothingness; nor do they know, in their own experience and to its full extent, the meaning of self-crucifixion. Hence their confusion, when in their own view, things do not go right; hence their evident dejection, when the voice of the multitude is suddenly a little adverse to them; hence their plans, their contrivances, too much like the plans and calculations of human policy. They are not

destitute of christian graces; but they need more lowliness of heart, and more faith. Nevertheless they have had much experience of the divine goodness; God owns and blesses them; and their memorial is often written in multitudes of grateful hearts.

THIRD.—A third class are those, whose life may be said to be emphatically a LIFE OF FAITH, attended with an entire renunciation and crucifixion of *Self*. Faith is not perfect, until Self is crucified; and the converse is equally true, that perfect faith necessarily results in entire self-renunciation.

In the second class of persons, which has been mentioned, the spiritual life mingles more or less, and perhaps in nearly equal proportions, with the tendencies and activities of nature. The fire, which blazes up from their hearts, and which often casts a broad light upon the surrounding multitude, is a mixed fire, partly from heaven and partly from earth. The natural unholy principles are not extinct; but can only be said to be partly purified, and to be turned into a new channel. Hence they will oftentimes fight for God with the same zeal, and almost in the same manner, that worldly men fight for their temporary and worldly objects; with great earnestness, with an unquiet and turbulent indignation, and sometimes with a cruelty of attack, which vents itself in misrepresentations, and which persecutes even to prison and to death.

But the class of Christians, to whom we are now attending, having their souls fully fixed in God by

FAITH, cannot consent to serve their heavenly Father with the instruments which Satan furnishes. They sow the seed; but they have faith in the *God of the harvest*; and they know that all will be well in the end. They are not inactive; but they move only at God's command, and in God's way; and are fully satisfied with the result, which God may see fit to give. At the command of the world or of a worldly spirit, they would not "turn upon their heel to save their life." But to God they hold all in subjection; and they rest calmly in the great Central Power. These are men of a grave countenance; of a retired life except when duty calls to public action; of few words, simple manners, and inflexible principle. They have renounced Self; and they naturally seek a low place, remote from public observation and unreached by human applause. When they are silent to human hearing, they are conversing with God; and when they open their lips and speak, it is the message which God gives, and is spoken with the demonstration of the Spirit. When they are apparently inactive, they are gaining strength from the Divine Fountain; drinking nourishment into the inmost soul. And when they move, although with quiet step, the heart of the multitude is shaken and troubled at their approach, because God moves with them. There is no thunder, but the "still small voice;" no smoke, but consuming fire.

These are the men, of whom martyrs are made. When the day of great tribulation comes, when dungeons are ready, and fires are burning, then

God permits his children, who are weak in the faith, to stand aside. Then the illuminated Christians, those who live in the region of high emotion, rather than of quiet faith, who have been conspicuous in the world of christian activity, and have been as a pleasant and a loud song, and in many things have done nobly, will unfold to the right and the left, and let this little company, of whom the world is ignorant, and whom it cannot know, come up from their secret places to the great battle of the Lord. To them the prison is as acceptable as the throne; the place of degradation as the place of honor. They eat of the "hidden manna;" and they have the secret name given them, "which no man knoweth." Ask them how they *feel*, and they will perhaps be startled, because their thoughts are thus turned from God to themselves. And they will answer by asking, What God *wills?* They *have* no feeling, separate from the will of God. All high and low, all joy and sorrow, all honor and dishonor, all friendship and enmity, are brought to a level; and are merged and lost in the great realization of God present in the heart. Hence chains and dungeons have no terrors; a bed of fire is as a bed of down.

It is here, in this class of persons, that we find the great grace of sanctification; a word, alas, too little understood in the Church. These are they, who, in the spirit of self-crucifixion, live by *faith, and faith only.*

RELIGIOUS MAXIMS.*

Having a connection with the doctrines and practice of Holiness.

I.

Think much and pray much; but let your words be few, and uttered with seriousness and deliberation, as in God's presence. And yet regard may be had to times and seasons. We may innocently act the child with children, which in the presence of grown persons would have the appearance of thoughtlessness and levity. And may perhaps at times express our gratitude to God and our holy joys, with an increased degree of freedom and vivacity, especially in the company of those who bear the same image, and who know what it is to rejoice in the Holy Ghost.

II.

Be silent when blamed and reproached unjustly, and under such circumstances that the reproachful and injurious person will be likely, from the influence of his own reflections, to discover his error and wrong speedily. Listen not to the suggestions of nature, which would prompt a hasty reply; but receive the injurious treatment with humility and calmness; and He, in whose

* These Maxims, and also some of the Chapters in the preceding part of the Work, have already appeared in the guide to Christian Perfection.

name you thus suffer, will reward you with inward consolation, while He sends the sharp arrow of conviction into the heart of your adversary.

III.

In whatever you are called upon to do, endeavor to maintain a calm, collected, and prayerful state of mind. Self-recollection is of great importance. "It is good for a man to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." He, who is in what may be called a spiritual hurry, or rather who runs without having evidence of being spiritually sent, makes haste to no purpose.

IV.

Seek holiness rather than consolation. Not that consolation is to be despised, or thought lightly of; but solid and permanent consolation is the result rather than the forerunner of holiness; therefore he, who seeks consolation as a distinct and independent object, will miss it. Seek and possess holiness, and consolation, (not perhaps often in the form of exstatic and rapturous joys, but rather of solid and delightful peace,) will follow, as assuredly as warmth follows the dispensation of the rays of the sun. He, who is holy, must be happy.

V.

Be not disheartened because the eye of the world is constantly and earnestly fixed upon you, to detect your errors and to rejoice in your halting. But rather regard this state of things, trying as it may be, as one of the safeguards, which a kind Father has placed around you, to keep alive in your own bosoms an antagonist spirit of watchfulness, and to prevent those very mistakes and transgressions, which your enemies eagerly anticipate.

VI.

Do not think it strange, when troubles and persecu-

tions come upon you. Rather receive them quietly and thankfully, as coming from a Father's hand. Yea, happy are ye, if, in the exercise of faith, you can look above the earthly instrumentality, above the selfishness and malice of men, to him who has permitted them for your good. Thus persecuted they the Savior and the prophets.

VII.

"Be ye angry and sin not." The life of our Savior, as well as the precepts of the apostles, clearly teaches us, that there may be occasions, on which we may have feelings of displeasure, and even of anger, without sin. Sin does not necessarily attach to anger, considered in its nature, but in its degree. Nevertheless, anger seldom exists in fact, without becoming in its measurement inordinate and excessive. Hence it is important to watch against it, lest we be led into transgression. Make it a rule, therefore, never to give any outward expression to angry feelings, (a course which will operate as a powerful check upon their excessive action,) until you have made them the subject of reflection and prayer. And thus you may hope to be kept.

VIII.

True peace of mind does not depend, as some seem to suppose, on the external incidents of riches and poverty, of health and sickness, of friendship and enmities. It has no necessary dependence upon society or seclusion; upon dwelling in cities or in the desert; upon the possession of temporal power, or a condition of temporal insignificance and weakness. "The kingdom of God is within you." Let the heart be right, let it be fully united with the will of God, and we shall be entirely contented with those circumstances, in which Providence has seen fit to place us, however unpropitious they may be in a worldly point of view. He,

who gains the victory over himself, gains the victory over all his enemies.

IX.

Some persons think of obedience as if it were nothing else, and could be nothing else, than servitude. And it must be admitted, that *constrained* obedience is so. He, who obeys by compulsion and not freely, wears a chain upon his spirit, which continually frets and torments, while it confines him. But this is not Christian obedience. To obey with the whole heart, in other words to obey as Christ would have us, is essentially the same as to be perfectly resigned to the will of God; having no will but His. And he must have strange notions of the interior and purified life, who supposes, that the obedience, which revolves constantly and joyfully within the limits of the Divine Will, partakes of the nature of servitude. On the contrary, true obedience, that which has its seat in the affections, and which flows out like the gushing of water, may be said, in a very important sense, to possess not only the nature, but the very essence of freedom.

X.

A sanctified state of heart does not require to be sustained by any mere forms of bodily excitation. It gets above the dominion, at least in a very considerable degree, of the nerves and the senses. It seeks an atmosphere of calmness, of thought, of holy meditation.

XI.

Our spiritual strength will be nearly in proportion to the absence of self-dependence and self-confidence. When we are weak in ourselves, we shall not fail, if we apply to the right source for help, to be found strong in the Lord. Madame Guyon, speaking of certain temptations to which she had been exposed, says, "I then compre-

hended what power a soul has, which is entirely annihilated." This is strong language; but when it is properly understood, it conveys important truth. When we sink in ourselves, we rise in God. When we have no strength in ourselves, we have divine power in Him, who can subdue all his adversaries. "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

XII.

In proportion as the heart becomes sanctified, there is a diminished tendency to enthusiasm and fanaticism. And this is undoubtedly one of the leading tests of sanctification. One of the marks of an enthusiastic and fanatical state of mind, is a fiery and unrestrained impetuosity of feeling; a rushing on, sometimes very blindly, as if the world were in danger, or as if the great Creator were not at the helm. It is not only feeling without a good degree of judgment, but, what is the corrupting and fatal trait, it is feeling without a due degree of confidence in God. True holiness reflects the image of God in this respect as well as in others, that it is calm, thoughtful, deliberate, immutable. And how can it be otherwise, since, rejecting its own wisdom and strength, it incorporates into itself the wisdom and strength of the Almighty.

XIII.

The hidden life, which God imparts to his accepted people, may flourish in solitudes and deserts; far from the societies of men and the din and disturbance of cities. From the cave of the hermit, from the cell of the solitary recluse, the fervent prayer has often arisen, which has been acceptable in the sight of God. But it would be a strange and fatal misconception, that religion, even in

its most pure and triumphant exaltations, can flourish no where else. The home of holiness is in the heart, irrespective of outward situations and alliances; and therefore we may expect to find it, if there are hearts adapted to its reception and growth, in the haunts of business as well as in the silence of retirement; in the palaces of Rome, as well as in the deserts of the Thebais. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that we cannot be holy except on the condition of a situation and circumstances in life such as shall suit ourselves. It is one of the first principles of holiness to leave our times and our places, our going out and our coming in, our wasted and our goodly heritage entirely with the Lord. Here, O Lord, hast thou placed us, and we will glorify thee here.

XIV.

In the agitations of the present life, beset and perplexed as we are with troubles, how natural it is to seek earnestly some place of rest. And hence it is that we so often reveal our cares and perplexities to our fellow men, and seek comfort and support from that source. But the sanctified soul, having experienced the uncertainties of all human aids, turns instinctively to the great God. And hiding itself in the presence and protection of the divine existence, it reposes there, as in a strong tower which no enemies can conquer, and as an everlasting rock which no floods can wash away. It knows the instructive import of that sublime exclamation of the Psalmist, (Ps. lxii. 5,) "My soul, wait thou ONLY upon God; for my expectation is from him."

XV.

Speak not often of your own actions, nor even, when it can be properly avoided, make allusion to yourself, as an agent in transactions which are calculated to attract notice. We do not suppose, as some may be inclined to

do, that frequent speaking of our actions is necessarily a proof, although it may furnish a presumption, of inordinate self-love or vanity; but it cannot be denied that by such a course, we expose ourselves to temptations and dangers in that direction. It is much safer, and is certainly much more profitable, to speak of what has been done for us and wrought in us,—to speak, for instance, of ourselves as the recipients of the goodness of God, than to speak of what we have ourselves done. But even here, also, although it may often be an imperative duty, there is need of deliberation and caution.

XVI.

There are many persons, who would willingly be Christians, and eminent Christians too, if Christianity were limited to great occasions. For such occasions they call forth whatever pious and devotional resources they have, or seem to have, and not only place them in the best light, but inspire them, for the time being, with the greatest possible efficiency. But on smaller occasions, in the every day occurrences and events of life, the religious principle is in a state of dormancy; giving no signs of effective vitality and movement. The life of such persons is not like that of the sun, equable, constant, diffusive, and beneficent, though attracting but little notice; but like the eruptive and glaring blaze of volcanoes, which comes forth at remote periods, in company with great thunderings and shakings of the earth; and yet the heart of the people is not made glad by it. Such religion is vain; and its possessors know not what manner of spirit they are of.

XVII.

Out of death springs life. We must die naturally, in order that we may live spiritually. The beautiful flowers spring up from dead seeds; and from the death of

those evil principles, that spread so diffusively and darkly over the natural heart, springs up the beauty of a new life, the quiet but ravishing bloom of Holiness.

XVIII.

A strong faith has the power to make a virtual and present reality of those things which are in fact future. Be it so that we have not the thing itself in the literal sense of the term; that we have not heaven; that we have not the visible presence of Christ; that we have not those things, whatsoever they may be, which constitute the glory and blessedness of the future world. But it is certain that in the Bible we have the promise of them; we have the title-deed, the bond, the mortgage, most solemnly made out and delivered to us. All these things are, therefore, ours, if we fully believe in the promise; and they can all be made, in the exercise of entire faith, a virtual and present reality. A man reckons his notes, bonds, and bills, which are the certificates and confirmations of absent possessions, as so much property, as actual money, although it is only virtually and by faith realized to be such. He counts himself as truly and really owning the property, in amount and kind, which the face of his papers, of his notes and bonds, represents. And yet he has nothing in hand but his papers, and his faith in the individuals, who have signed them. How much more then should we have faith in *our* title deeds, in *our* bonds and testaments, which are written in the blood of the Son of God, are confirmed by the oath of the Father, and are witnessed by the Holy Ghost! And how much more should we, having such deeds and bonds, and such immutable confirmations of them, count God ours, and Christ and the Holy Spirit ours, and eternal glory ours!

XIX.

It is an excellent saying of the celebrated Fenelon, "It is only imperfection that complains of what is imperfect." It would be well for those, who aim at Christian perfection, to remember this. Surrounded by those who constantly exhibit defects of character and conduct, if we yield to a complaining and impatient spirit, we shall mar our own peace, without having the satisfaction of benefitting others. When the mind is in a right position, absorbed in God and truly dead to the world, it will not be troubled by these things. Or if it be otherwise, and we are in fact afflicted, it will be for others and not for ourselves; and we shall be more disposed to pity than to complain.

XX.

Prayer without faith is vain. A pious English writer, one who lived as far back as the days of the Puritans, and who uses various homely but instructive illustrations after the manner of those times, calls prayer the "BUCKET of the soul, by which it draws water out of the wells of salvation. But without Faith, you may let down this bucket again and again, and never bring up one drop of solid comfort."* It is Faith, which fills the bucket. And accordingly, if our faith be weak, we shall find but poor and famishing returns. A full bucket depends on the condition of a strong faith.

XXI.

One of the most important requisites of a holy life is PATIENCE. And by this, we do not mean merely a meek and quiet temper, when one is personally assaulted and injured; but a like meekness and quietness of temper in relation to the moral and religious progress of the world. We may be deeply afflicted in view of the des-

* Symond's Sight and Faith, printed in 1651.

olations of Zion ; but let us ever remember and rejoice, that the cause of truth and holiness is lodged safely in the hands of God. With him a thousand years are as one day. And in the darkest moments, when Satan seems to be let loose with ten-fold fury, let us thank God and take courage, because the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

XXII.

It may sometimes be practically important to make a distinction between a renunciation of the world and a renunciation of ourselves. A man may, in a certain sense and to a certain extent, renounce the world, and yet may find himself greatly disappointed in his anticipations of spiritual improvement and benefit. He has indeed renounced the world, as it presents itself to us in its externalities ; he has renounced its outward attractions ; its perverted and idle shows. He may have carried his renouncement so far as to seclude himself entirely from society, and to spend his days in some solitary desert. But it avails nothing, or almost nothing, because there is not at the same time an internal renunciation ; a crucifixion and renunciation of self. A mere crucifixion of the outward world may still leave a vitality and luxuriance of the selfish principle ; but a crucifixion of self necessarily involves the crucifixion, in the scripture sense, of every thing else.

XXIII.

It is one among the pious and valuable maxims, which are ascribed to Francis de Sales ; "A judicious silence is always better than truth spoken without charity." The very undertaking to instruct or censure others, implies an assumption of intellectual or moral superiority. It cannot be expected, therefore, that the attempt will be well received, unless it is tempered with a heav-

enly spirit. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not CHARITY, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

XXIV.

We may be deprived of outward consolations and still have consolations of heart. But this is not all. We may be deprived in the sovereignty of God, and for wise purposes, of *inward* consolations also; and may be left for a time in a state of mental barrenness and desolation. And yet faith, precious faith, discouraging as this state of things may seem, may still remain; and not feebly merely, but in the strength and fulness of its exercise. It is still our delightful privilege to say of God, that He is *our* God, *our* Father, *our* Friend and Portion. "Blessed is the man, that *trusteth* in the Lord."

XXV.

No man ever arrived at Christian perfection, no man ever *can* arrive at that ennobling state, who walks by sight rather than by faith, of whom it cannot be said, as of the father of the faithful, "he went out, *not knowing whither he went*." Perhaps we may say, it is the highest attainment of the soul, (certainly it is the foundation of the highest or perfect state in all other Christian attainments,) that of entire and unwavering confidence in God. O, God, we are thine; forever thine. We will not let Thee go, until Thou bless us. And when Thou dost bless us, still we will not let Thee go. For without Thee, even blessing would be turned into cursing.—Therefore will we ever trust in Thee.

XXVI.

Always make it a rule to do every thing, which it is proper and a duty to do, in the best manner and to the best of your ability. An imperfect execution of a thing, where we might have done better, is not only unprofita-

ble, but it is a *vicious* execution; or in other words, is morally wrong. He, who aims at perfection in great things, but is willing to be imperfect in little things, will find himself essentially an imperfect man. The perfection of the greater will be no compensation, and no excuse for the imperfection of the less. Such a person wants the essential principle of universal obedience. Consider well, therefore, what God in his Providence would have you perform; and if you feel the spirit of those directions, which require us to do all things as unto God rather than unto men, you will not do them with a false heart or a feeble hand. And thus in small things, as well as in great, in those which are unseen as well as in those which attract notice, it shall be said of you, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

XXVII.

A fixed, inflexible will is a great assistance in a holy life. Satan will suggest a thousand reasons, why we should yield a little to the temptations by which we are surrounded; but let us ever stand fast in our purpose. A good degree of decision and tenacity of purpose is of great importance in the ordinary affairs of life. How much more so in the things of religion! He, who is easily shaken, will find the way of holiness difficult; perhaps impracticable. A double-minded man, he, who has no fixedness of purpose, no energy of will, is "unstable in all his ways." Ye, who walk in the narrow way, let your resolution be unalterable. Think of the blessed Savior. "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" Though he was momentarily forsaken, at least so far as to be left to anguish inconceivable and unutterable, his heart nevertheless was fixed, and he could still say, "*My* God, *my* God."

XXVIII.

We may pray with the intellect, without praying with the heart; but we cannot pray with the heart without praying with the intellect. Such are the laws of the mind, that there can be no such thing as praying without a knowledge of the thing we pray for. Let the heart be full, wholly given up to the pursuit of the object; but let your perception of the object be distinct and clear. This will be found honorable to God and beneficial to the soul.

XXIX.

Many persons think they are seeking holiness, when they are in fact seeking the "loaves and fishes." To be holy is to be like Christ, who, as the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect *through suffering*. We must be willing to bear the Cross, if we would wear the crown. In seeking holiness, therefore, let us think little of joy, but much of purity; little of ourselves, but much of God; little of our own wills, but much of the Divine will. We will choose the deepest poverty and affliction with the will of God, rather than all earthly goods and prosperities without it. It is God we seek, and not happiness. If we have God, He will not fail to take care of us. If we abide in Him, even a residence in hell could not harm us. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

XXX.

Thou hast contended with Satan, and hast been successful. Thou hast fought with him, and he has fled from thee. But, O, remember his artifices. Do not indulge the belief that his nature is changed. True, indeed, he is now very complacent, and is, perhaps, singing thee some syren song; but he was never more a

devil than he is now. He now assaults thee, *by not assaulting thee;* and knows that he shall conquer, when THOU FALLEST ASLEEP.

XXXI.

The value of a thing is known by what it takes to preserve it, as well as by what it originally cost. Men may steal your diamonds, who would not trouble things of less worth. The cost of holiness was the blood of the Son of God; and greatly does he mistake, who supposes it can be preserved by anything short of ETERNAL VIGILANCE.

XXXII.

If earthly plants are permitted to spring up in the heart, how is it possible that the tree of holiness should flourish? With the ground already occupied with earthly products, the roots of sanctification, deprived of the nourishment, which should sustain them, necessarily wither and die. There is not nutriment enough to sustain both. Hence it is that our Savior, in his divine wisdom, tells us of those who are choked with the riches, and cares, and pleasures of this life, "and BRING NO FRUIT TO PERFECTION."

XXXIII.

The power of Satan is great. And it is his appropriate business continually to assault the saints of God. If then, in some unhappy and evil moment, (by thine own fault be it remembered,) he gains an advantage, lament over it deeply, but do not be discouraged. Remember if the great enemy gets from thee thy *resolution*, thy fixed purpose, he gets all. To be defeated is not to be wholly destroyed. But on the contrary, he, and he only, hath victory written upon his forehead, who, in the moment of his severest overthrow, hath still the heart to say, "with the Lord helping me, I WILL TRY AGAIN."

XXXIV.

It seems to have been the doctrine of some advocates of Christian perfection, especially some pious Catholics of former times, that the various propensities and affections and particularly the bodily appetites, ought to be entirely *eradicated*. But this doctrine, when carried to its full extent, is one of the artifices of Satan, by which the cause of holiness has been greatly injured. It is not more difficult to regulate the natural principles, than to destroy them; and there is no doubt that the more difficult duty in this case, is the scripture one. We are not required to eradicate our natural propensities and affections, but to *purify* them. We are not required to cease to be men, but merely to become *holy* men.

XXXV.

It is of the nature of holiness to unite with whatever is like itself. It flies on eagle's wings to meet its own image. Accordingly the soul, so long as it is stained with sin, has an affinity with what is sinful. But when it is purified from iniquity, it ascends boldly upward and rests, by the impulse of its own being, in the bosom of its God. The element of separation is taken away; and a union, strong as the universe and lasting as eternity, necessarily takes place. "*He, that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.*"—1 Cor. vi. 17.

XXXVI.

It is sometimes the case, that those, who are seeking sanctification, anticipate results which are more accordant with human wisdom, than with the ways of divine Providence. They say, "make me clean, and I shall have UNDERSTANDING. Sanctify me, and I shall be made STRONG." Such anticipations, which show that the heart is not yet delivered from its worldliness, are not confirmed, in the sense in which they now exist in the

mind, by their subsequent experience. When sanctified, as they are thoroughly emptied of self, they have neither wisdom nor strength of their own. They know not what to do, nor how to do it. They abhor the idea of placing confidence in themselves, and find they must apply to the Savior for every thing. They derive all from him. In the language of scripture, he is made to them "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, HE THAT GLORIETH, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."

XXXVII.

It is a melancholy fact, that the religion of many persons is not constantly operative, but it is manifested periodically, or at some particular times. It is assumed, for instance, on the Sabbath; but is laid aside on the shelf during the week days. But true holiness, be it remembered, is not a thing to be worn for occasions; to be put off or put on, with an easy accommodation to circumstances or one's private convenience. It takes too deep root in the heart to be so easily disposed of as such a course would imply. It is meat, with which we are fed; clothing, with which we are clothed; the interior and permanent principle of life, which animates and sustains the whole man.

XXXVIII.

The remark is somewhere made, and very correctly, that "*it is a great loss to lose an affliction.*" Certain it is, that afflictions have great power in purifying the mind. And if it be true that mental purification, in other words, holiness, is a result of all others the most desirable, we may properly attach a great value to whatever tends to this result. Prosperities flatter us with the hope that our rest is here; but afflictions lead our thoughts to another and better land. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son that he receiveth."

XXXIX.

It is a striking remark, ascribed to St Augustine, that *prayer is the measure of love.* A remark which implies, that those, who love much, will pray much; and that those who pray much, will love much. This remark is not more scripturally than philosophically true. It is the nature of love to lead the person who exercises this passion, as it were, out of himself. His heart is continually attracted towards the beloved object. He naturally and necessarily exercises, in connection with the object of love, the communion of the affections. And this, it will be readily seen, viz: the communion of the affections, is the essential characteristic; and perhaps it may be said, the essence and sum of prayer. In acceptable prayer the soul goes forth to God in various acts of adoration, supplication, and thanksgiving; all of which imply feelings of trust and confidence, and particularly love to him, who is the object of prayer. Accordingly he, who loves much, cannot help praying much. And on the other hand, when the streams of holy communion with God fail in any considerable degree, it is a sure sign that that there is a shallowness and drought in that fountain of love, from which they have their source.

XL.

The divine life, which in every stage of its existence depends upon the presence of the Spirit of God, places a high estimate on mental tranquillity. It is no new thing to remark that the Holy Spirit has no congeniality with, and no pleasure in the soul, where strife and clamor have taken possession. If, therefore, we would have the Holy Spirit with us always, we must avoid and flee, with all the intensity of our being, all inordinate coveting, all envying, malice, and evil speaking, all impatience, jealousy, and anger. Of such a heart, and such

only, which is calm as well as pure, partaking something of the self-collected and sublime tranquillity of the divine mind, can it be said, in the truest and highest sense, that it is a A TEMPLE FITTED FOR THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

XLI.

Where there is true Christian perfection, there is always great humility; a Christian grace which it is difficult to define, but which implies at least a quiet and subdued, a meek and forbearing spirit. Whatever may be our supposed gifts and graces, whatever may be our internal pleasures and raptures, they are far from furnishing evidence of completeness of Christian character without humility. It is this grace, which perhaps more than any other, imparts a beauty and attractiveness to the religious life; and which, while it is blessed with the favor and approbation of God, has the additional efficacy of disarming, in a considerable degree, even the hostility of unholy men. It has the appearance of a contradiction in terms, but is nevertheless true, that he, who walks in humility, walks in power.

XLII.

It is, perhaps, a common idea that humility implies weakness; and that lowliness of spirit is the same thing with spiritual imbecility. But this certainly is not a correct view. Christian humility, it is true, has nothing in itself; but it has much in God. In a word, it is the renunciation of our own wisdom, that we may receive wisdom from above; the negation and banishment of our own strength, that we may possess divine strength; the rejection of our own righteousness, that we may receive the righteousness of Christ. How, then, can it possibly be weak and imbecile, while it merely casts off the broken shield of earth, that it may put on the bright panoply of heaven?

XLIII.

In vain does the man attempt to see, whose sight is obscured by the cataract, or by some other equally ruinous disease. Nor is he less blind, over whose spiritual eye sin has drawn its opaque scales and films. Hence it is said in scripture, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." But break off and purge away the spiritual cataract, and the power of vision will return. In proportion as the eye of the soul is purified from the perplexity of earthly corruptions, does Christ become the true light of the mind; and the beauty of the divine character begins from that moment to unveil itself in all its wonderful perfection. "BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD."

XLIV.

Pray earnestly for sanctification. Let this be the desire of your heart from morning till evening, and from evening till morning. On this subject keep the soul resolutely fixed. Take no denial. Refuse to be comforted, till you are blessed. But nevertheless, be careful, that you impose no conditions upon God. Say not, thou must do it in this way or in that. Remember, He is a sovereign; and that you are nothing. Sometimes He comes and turns out the evil legions of the heart with observation and with a triumphant shout. But not unfrequently He is mighty in his silence, and smites and destroys his enemies by an agency so mysterious and secret, that it seems to be alike unseen and unheard.

XLV.

When on a certain occasion the pious Fenelon, after having experienced much trouble and persecution from his opposers, was advised by some one to take greater precautions against the artifices and evil designs of men, he made answer in the true spirit of a Christian, MORIA-

MUR IN SIMPLICITATE NOSTRA, "*let us die in our simplicity.*" He, that is wholly in Christ, has a oneness and purity of purpose, altogether inconsistent with those tricks and subterfuges, which are so common among men. He walks in broad day. He goes forth in the light of conscious honesty. He is willing, that men and angels should read the very bottom of his heart. He has but one rule. His language is in the ordinary affairs of life, as well as in the duties of religion, "My Father, what wilt thou have me to do?"—This is christian simplicity; and happy, thrice happy is he, who possesses it.

XLVI.

If we wish to rise high in God, we must be willing to sink low in ourselves. It may seem like a contradiction in terms, but it is nevertheless true, that there is no elevation in true religion higher than that of profound humility. He, that would be the greatest, must become the least. He, who is equal with God, condescended to become man. And it was the beloved Son of the Most High, that washed the feet of the disciples.

XLVII.

It is not by the mere number of our words and actions, that we can most effectually serve the cause of God and glorify his name. It is the temper in which they are done, rather than the mere multiplication of them, which gives them power. It was the remark of a good man, who had much experience as a minister of the gospel, that "*we mar the work of God by doing it in our own spirit.*"

XLVIII.

Many persons seem to be more solicitous for *strong* emotions than for *right* emotions. It would perhaps be a fair representation of their state to say the burden of their prayer is, that their souls might be like "the char-

iots of Amminadib" or that, like Paul, they may be caught up into the third heavens. They seem desirous, perhaps almost unconsciously to themselves, to experience or to do some *great*, as well as some *good* thing. Would it not be better for them in a more chastened and humble temper of mind, to make it the burden and emphasis of their supplication, that they may be meek, forbearing, and forgiving; that they may have a willingness to wash the disciples' feet, and have great love even for their enemies; in a word, that they may bear the image of Christ, who came not with observation, but was "*meek and lowly of heart?*"

XLIX.

It is quite possible for a man to possess evidence of sanctification, who is temporarily destitute of joyful and rapturous emotions. But it is not possible for a man to possess such evidence, who is destitute of a living, operative, and effective conscience. On no part of our nature does sanctification work greater effects than on the conscience. It may be said to give to it an intensity and multiplicity of existence; so that like the flaming sword of the cherubims, it turns every way and guards the tree of life.

L.

The man, who is troubled at great sins, particularly such as involve a degree of notoriety, but finds himself slightly affected and troubled in the commission of small or hidden ones, has but little claim to the grace of sanctification. One of the surest marks of sanctification is an increased sensitiveness to sin in all its degrees. The slightest sin is a source of unspeakable misery to the sanctified heart; and gives the soul no rest, till it is washed out in overflowing tears of penitence.

LI.

In a state of mere justification, it is often and perhaps generally the case, that it requires a great mental effort to turn our thoughts and affections from worldly objects, and to fix them strongly and firmly upon God. In a state of sanctification, it is the reverse of this. To a holy heart the difficult and painful effort is to turn away its thoughts and affections from the supreme object of its love and to fix them, even when duty authorizes it, upon objects of an inferior nature.

LII.

Persons sometimes miss of the blessing of sanctification by aiming at it, not being aware of the artifices of the adversary, in what may perhaps be called an unsanctified manner. We are not to desire sanctification, which is probably the case with some, merely because it is an elevated and honorable state of soul, and in point of rank far above any other mortal condition, but because it is the only true and worthy consummation of our moral and religious existence, and especially because it is the will of our heavenly Father.

LIII.

All persons, it is probable, are willing to be justified, because all are willing to be saved. But all are not willing to be sanctified, because all are not willing to renounce the pleasures of the world.

LIV.

A spirit of entire obedience is one of the important characteristics of a sanctified state. Not obedience merely, but *entire* obedience. He, who obeys in some things, but is fretful and rebellious in others, has not the reality; and it can hardly be said, that he has even the appearance of holiness.

LV.

He, that is united to God, loves solitude. But it is solitude in the relative rather than the absolute sense. True, he is secluded from men, but while he is shut out from the world he is shut up in God; and in the absence of human society, has the far better society of the Infinite Mind.

LVI.

"*Little love, little trust*," says Archbishop Leighton. The converse of this is equally true. If there be but little trust, there will be but little love. If we believe the words of our heavenly Father with the whole heart, it will be certain that we shall love him with the whole heart.

LVII.

Sanctification consists in LOVE rather than in KNOWLEDGE. Nevertheless, it is a great and delightful truth, that those, who love much, shall know much. They shall be led to the very heights of knowledge. Love shall bring light. The great God himself will be their teacher.

LVIII.

How pleasant, how delightful is a holy imagination! It instinctively refuses and throws away every thing that can defile. It is a sort of inner sanctuary; or perhaps we may call it the bridal chamber of the soul, fitted up and adorned with every thing pure in earth and beautiful in heaven. And God himself is the bright light thereof.

LIX.

"*Let not your heart be troubled.*" And in regard to those who indulge the hope that they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, we may well inquire, why should their heart be troubled; Have they not a great protector?

Must not the archers first hit Him, whom thy soul loveth, before they can hit thee? "What can harm thee," says archbishop Leighton, who spoke on these things from the fulness of his own pious spirit, "when all must first touch God, within whom thou hast enclosed thyself?"

LX.

It is a great art in the Christian life to LEARN TO BE SILENT. Under oppositions, rebukes, injuries, STILL BE SILENT. It is better to say nothing, than to say it in an excited or an angry manner, even if the occasion should seem to justify a degree of anger. By remaining silent, the mind is enabled to collect itself, and to call upon God in secret aspirations of prayer. And thus you will speak to the honor of your holy profession, as well as to the good of those who have injured you, *when you speak from God.*

LXI.

It is important to make a distinction between sorrow and impatience. We may feel sorrow without sin; but we can never feel Impatience without sin. Impatience always involves a want of submission; and he, who is wanting in submission, even in the smallest degree, is not perfect before God.

LXII.

We may lay it down as a principle in the religious life, that every thing is wrong, in regard to which we cannot ask the divine direction and blessing. When we sin, we wish, like our first parents, to hide ourselves from Him whom we have offended. But it is the nature of a pure heart, always to seek God. Its language is, in all the occurrences and duties of life, "My Father, what wilt *thou* have me to do?"

LXIII.

A Christian is prospectively a citizen of heaven; but actually, and at the present time, he is a citizen of the world. Remember this, and do not think so much of what *is to be*, as to forget what *is*. We have a great work in the present life, and in the precise situation where God has placed us. Angels glorify God in heaven; men must glorify him on the earth.

LXIV.

Many profess religion; many, we may charitably hope, possess religion; but few, very few, if we may judge from appearances, are aiming with all their powers at perfection in religion. Nevertheless, it is only upon this last class, that the Savior looks with unmingled approbation. In regard to all those who aim at any thing short of bearing his full image, it may be said with truth, that he is wounded in the house of his friends.

LXV.

If we would walk perfectly before God, we must endeavor to do common things, such as are of every day's occurrence, and of but small account in the eyes of the world, in a perfect manner. Some persons are so mentally constituted, that they could more easily undergo the sufferings of martyrdom, than properly regulate and control their feelings in their families during twenty-four hours. How dreadful is that delusion, which excuses itself in its imperfections, because in the providence of God, it is not permitted to do or to suffer some great thing. Happy is he who can do God's will in the solitary place, and who can win the crown without going to the stake.

LXVI.

It is a most dangerous mistake to suppose that we can compensate, by exterior acts, however important they

may be, for a want of interior devotion. Men may even minister at the altar, with all the outward eloquence of a Massillon, and yet with hearts full of unbelief. A want of a right or perfect state of the outward action may expose us to the condemnation of men; but an imperfection of the inward or spiritual action exposes us to the condemnation of God. If we can please both God and men, it is well; but above all things, let us not fail to please God, who, in opposition to the course which men usually take, regards the inward principle much more than the mere outward development of it.

LXVII.

If we fail on suitable occasions to declare what God has done for our souls, we shall be likely to offend our heavenly Father. But on the other hand, if we make such declarations, Satan will be likely to be present and tempt us to spiritual pride. Happy is the man, who can relate and extol God's gracious dealings with him, with such meekness and humility, as to furnish no entrance to evil.

LXVIII.

It will help us to ascertain whether we are truly humble, if we inquire whether we are free from the opposites of humility. The opposites of a humble state of mind, (or at least those things which sustain a divergent and antagonist relation,) are impatience, uneasiness, a feeling that something and perhaps much depends on ourselves, undue sensitiveness to the praise and reproofs of men, and sensoriousness. No man should account himself truly humbled, who is the subject of these unhappy states of mind.

LXIX.

It is a great practical principle in the religious life, that *a state of suffering furnishes the test of love.* When

God is pleased to bestow his favors upon us, when his blessings are repeated every hour, how can we tell whether we love him for what he *is*, or for what he *gives*? But when in seasons of deep and varied afflictions, our heart still clings to him as our only hope and only joy, we may well say, "Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee."

LXX.

In believing in the possibility of present sanctification, and in combining with this belief the determination to attain to it, we realize in ourselves the possession of that shield of faith mentioned in the Scriptures, by means of which we are enabled to quench the fiery darts of the adversary. On the contrary, in rejecting this belief, and in acting in accordance with this rejection, we throw away our shield; and it is no more than reasonable to expect that we shall be pierced through and through with the enemy's weapons.

LXXI.

As a general thing, it may be expected that all Christians will find themselves able to bear the GREAT CROSSES of life, because they come with observation; they attract notice by their very magnitude; and, by putting the soul on its guard, give it strength to meet them. But happy, thrice happy is he, who can bear the LITTLE CROSSES, which ever lie in wait, and which attack us secretly and without giving warning, like a thief in the night.

LXXII.

We are told in the Scriptures that all things are the Christian's. Heaven, Christ, God, things present and things to come, *all* are his. But the possession in the present life is of a two-fold nature—sometimes by present enjoyment and sometimes by *faith*. More commonly,

and undoubtedly for wise reasons, the possession is by faith. But in the view of Him, whose life is hid with Christ, the possession is not on that account any the less sure.

LXXIII.

In endeavoring to estimate the genuineness of our religious experiences, we should ever keep in mind that all those experiences, which are wrought by the Spirit of God, and are genuine in their character, tend decidedly and uniformly to personal HUMILITY. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." How can it be otherwise? The tendency of all true religion is to make God every thing, and ourselves comparatively nothing; to sink the creature while it elevates and enthrones the Creator in the centre of the heart. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

LXXIV.

The height and sum of religion is to bear the image of Christ. But can those flatter themselves that they bear the Savior's image, who are overcome and are rendered impatient by every trifling incident of an adverse nature? Oh, remember that the life of Christ was from beginning to end a life of trouble. He was often misunderstood and ill treated by all classes; he was persecuted by the Pharisees; sold by the traitor whom he had chosen as one of his disciples; reviled by the thief on the cross; put to death. But he was far more desirous of the salvation and good of his enemies, than he was of personal exemption from their persecutions. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

LXXV.

There are various views of Christian perfection, which, on being analyzed, amount to the same thing; and when properly understood, may be regarded as all equally cor-

rect. The author of the Imitation of Christ, says it consists in man's offering up himself "with his whole heart to the will of God; never seeking his own will either in small or great respects, either in time or eternity; but with an equal mind weighing all things in the balance of the sanctuary; *and receiving both prosperity and adversity with continual thanksgiving.*"

LXXVI.

Men bestow honor one upon another. Sometimes they build up, sometimes they pull down. But human opinions cannot alter the reality of things, by making it greater or less than it is. Every man is truly such and such only, AS HE IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

LXXVII.

Some persons seem to be able to trust God in every thing, excepting in one particular, viz. those cases, where they think themselves called upon to resent and punish the injuries they may have received. But what is the language of Scripture? "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." It is said of Christ himself, Matt. xii. 19, "HE SHALL NOT STRIVE."

LXXVIII.

When I witness the erroneous estimate, which men often place on certain kinds of human knowledge, I am reminded of one of the remarkable sayings, which abound in the practical writings of St. Augustine. "Unhappy is he, who knows every thing else, and does not know God. Happy is he who knows God though he should be ignorant of every thing else."

LXXIX.

There are two classes of Christians; those who live chiefly by emotion, and those who live chiefly by faith. The first class, those who live chiefly by emotion, re-

mind one of ships, that move by the outward impulse of winds operating upon sails. They are often at a dead calm, often out of their course, and sometimes driven back. And it is only when the winds are fair and powerful that they move onward with rapidity. The other class, those who live chiefly by faith, remind one of the magnificent steamers which cross the Atlantic, which are moved by an interior and permanent principle, and which setting at defiance all ordinary obstacles, advance steadily and swiftly to their destination, through calm and storm, through cloud and sunshine.

LXXX.

There are some heathen philosophers, such as Socrates, Cicero, and Seneca, that occasionally announce moral and religious truths of great value. Truths, which are susceptible of an interpretation that will bring them into close harmony with the practical doctrines of Christianity. "The fewer things a man wants," said Socrates on a certain occasion, "the nearer he is to God."

LXXXI.

A parent, who loves an obedient and affectionate child, will sometimes give him a picture book, a musical instrument, or some other thing, as a token of his confidence and love. But if the parent should find the child so much taken up with the picture book as to forget the parental commands, and to be getting into ways of disobedience, he will take it away. And thus God sometimes imparts especial spiritual consolations to his children; but if he finds them, as he sometimes does, more taken up with the joys he gives than they are with himself and his commands, he will remove them. And he does it in great mercy. It is certainly better to lose the gift, than to be deprived of the Giver; to lose our consolations, than to lose our God.

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