1915

The personal profession of entire sanctification. Is it warrantable?

THE PERSONAL PROFESSION OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

IS IT WARRANTABLE?

GRADUATION THESIS.

JUNE 1", 1915.

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(Time spent in preparation, 84 hours.)

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BOOKS CONSULTED.

The Way of Holiness--Palmer.

Pentecostal Sanctification--Keen.

Christian Perfection--Peck.

Scriptural Way of Holiness--Macdonald.

Holiness, the Birthright of All God's Children--Crane

Christian Perfection--Law.

Christian Perfection as Taught by Wesley--Wood.

Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible--Beet.

The Saintly Calling--Mudge.

Growth in Holiness--Mudge.

The Perfect Life--Mudge.

Love Enthroned--Steele.

The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness.

The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life--Hopkins.

In Christ--A. J. Gordon.

System of Christian Doctrine--Sheldon.

The Way of Holiness--Brengle.

A Plain Account of Christian Perfection--Wesley.

THE PERSONAL PROFESSION OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION. IS IT WARRANTABLE?

Much of the contention that has arisen in discussions of the subject to be presented herein has been due, we believe, to a misunderstanding of terms used. Some authors, to avoid this, have, at the outset, defined their terms. This has been helpful, but not always as successful as might be hoped. If the author's definition of a word was not the usual one, few, if any, readers would be able to remember and apply his definition every time the word appeared. If one objects to the use of the word "perfection" as applied to a Christian, he will scarcely be able, while perusing a "holiness" book, to remember that that particular author means by "perfection" exactly what he would mean by the expression, "a very high Christian life"; and forgetting the special definition, he would be inclined to disagree with the author. If an author at the outset defines "black" in exactly the same terms that we should apply to "white", it would even then be very difficult for us to be reconciled to the statement that "snow is black".

In formal debate it is customary to open the ar-

gument by a definition of terms. Often the two sides so qualify their terms that we are at times at a loss to know "which is arguing for what." In the matter before us such procedure is almost constantly indulged in. Hence, our opening statement that terminology causes much of the contention in the discussion of this subject of the personal profession of entire sanctification. It is, in truth, often a discussion merely of words. The writer has a friend with whom he has spent hours and hours in discussions of this subject. We are not much nearer an agreement than we were when we began. My belief is that we both hold exactly the same ideas but express them differently.

For example, one man has one idea when he uses the word "sin". Another man has a different idea. To the one it may mean anything from murder to accidentally treading on his friend's corns. To the other it may mean only a voluntary transgression of a known law. To the former, some sins need no forgiveness; for the man was entirely innocent. To the latter, all sins require forgiveness, and if a sin does not, then it is no sin. To one, sin means the natural tendency of the human heart toward evil. To another, sin means only an actual act as a result of that tendency.

It might seem, then, that this paper should properly begin with a somewhat extensive definition of terms. But we shall make no such attempt. Suffice it to say that we will use words as they are commonly accepted in usage among people in general. We shall use such qualifying adjectives as seem necessary to avoid ambiguity and obscurity. We shall endeavor to make our meaning clear. It is hardly necessary to add that for all practical purposes, such words as "holiness", "sanctification", "saint", etc., are synonomous. Perhaps we will find occasion to modify these terms somewhat as they are used, but perhaps no one will be in any doubt as to what is meant by "entire sanctification", "perfection", etc.

One other cause of contention between disclaimers and advocates of perfection is that which arises out of the subtlety of certain questions connected with this subject. Even if we agree as to what sin is, we cannot be sure that we will not go on the rocks in the discussion of salvation from all sin. What is salvation from aal sin? Perhaps not even the most ardent advocates of perfection (except fanatics) will contend that a saint is positively insured against any possibility of falling from grace. Then we may sup-

pose that the saint is saved from all sin now, without absolute guarantee of the future. But let us examine this very elusive and subtle question a little more circumspectly. We will suppose that a man is converted, afterwards entirely sanctified, and then lives for a period of years a holy saintly life. If such could be, advocates of perfection would call him a saint, or a perfect man. He has attained to Christian perfection. Suppose again that at the end of this period of years, he falls,--does that fact invalidate his previous sainthood? The answer would most likely be that he was surely a perfect man during that period but was not so now. Very well. Shorten the period to only one year. It would certainly still be affirmed that he was a saint for that one year, however far he may now be from a state of grace. It would seem that sainthood is independent of time. A man may be entirely sanctified and live free from sin--perfect--for only a few months and then fall and yet not invalidate that period of sainthood. But narrow this down to one month, one day, one hour, one moment--what then? Suppose a man is actually sanctified in one moment and loses that state one moment later--can it be said that he was saved from all sin? We have dwelt unduly long

on this phase of our subject that it might be shown that the question of salvation from sin or all sin is one that is wary of exact and definite answer. At the exact moment of sanctification, one may be said to be saved from all sin. As to how he stands five minutes later may be a great question. Previous sins and subsequent fallings do not disprove that for a given period a man may be saved. But as to how short that period may be, probably no one will feel able to dogmatize.

We cite a concrete case where the subtlety of this question led a very great man somewhat astray. In Wesley's "Plain Account," the following argument finds a place. (P. 27). "1. We have a desire to be freed from all sin. 2. Wecbelieve God gave us that desire. 3. We pray for such. 4. If it is not attainable in this life, we are fools to pray for it." The trouble with this argument is that "sin already present" is confused with "sin not yet committed". Here is a great mistake. When we pray for forgiveness of all sin, we do desire to have all sin forfiven (and it is, if we persevere and have faith) but that is no guarantee that we shall be sinless ever after or for any length of time. That all sin committed in the past

and now present may be forgiven by God, needs no argument for its substantiation. That we will continue to live free from sin is nowhere guaranteed. There is a vast difference between being free from sin and living free from sin. Hence, Wesley's argument falls flat, unless, indeed, he is arguing for a guarantee of future sinlessness.

We may ask, "What is a clean heart?", but who will attempt to answer the question? The body is clean after a thorough bath. How clean? How long after the bath? The hands are clean after being thoroughly scrubbed in soap and water. How clean? They may be clean for all ordinary purposes but be very unclean for performing a delicate surgical operation. The surgeon asks if they are antiseptically clean. The hands may be clean and yet covered with germs , ordinarily harmless, but very deadly if allowed to enter a fresh wound. We pepeat the question, "What is a clean heart?". Who dares to answer? This same process may be applied to many other phases of this subject.

Paul's statement is often quoted to show the omnipotence of God. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." This is sure to be quoted when it is stated that it is imposs-

ible to live a perfect life here on earth. But the most radical perfectionist (except the insane) disclaim absolute perfection. But it may be remarked by the more liberal that if God's omnipotence guarantees relative perfection, why not also absolute perfection? To this the reply is apt to be that God does not remove the essential limitations of creaturehood and that therefore, man can be only relatively perfect. But to be consistent, the perfectionist must admit that God's omnipotence covers this last point and that He can remove the essential limitations of creaturehood. The argument might be prolonged by the reply that such an act would destroy the creature, and the rejoinder that God could take care of a little thing like that, and so on, ad infinitum. All the above is not a part of our discussion, but is presented merely to show with what subtle, wary, intangible, abstractions we are dealing.

Still another cause for some strife in discussions of this subject may be found in the extreme views of both the advocates and disclaimers of Christian perfection. To say that among the perfectionists there is a large number of fanatics is but to utter a truism. Among some of their wildest theories is the declara-

tion that a sanctified person cannot sin; that they are above any such possibility as temptation (thereby certainly being more favored than Jesus Himself) and that their every word, thought and deed--their whole life, in fact--is in absolute accord with the will of God. We do not honor such falsehoods by wasting any time or space in refutation. But these views have brought the whole matter of perfection into some disrepute and there has fastened on to the word a disagreeable shade of meaning that it did not originally have. For that reason some very good men hesitate to use it. But when it <u>is</u> used by any one either confuting or upholding the doctrine of Christian perfection, this alien flavor has caused much misunderstanding.

Crane, in his "Holiness, the Birthright of All God's Children", takes an extreme view from a rather novel angle. Stoutly maintaining that no residue of sin remains in any justified Christian, he holds that <u>all</u> Christians are holy. This seems like a radical view from a liberal standpoint. It is radical in that he contends for "holiness". It is liberal in that he eschews any idea of a second blessing.

Another extreme view is the declaration that sin <u>must of necessity</u> exist in believers. Indeed, it may

be and often is, but why of necessity?

Still another extreme is seen in the "other-worldliness" of some advocates of sanctification. Dr. Mudge in "The Saintly Calling", says that one test of saintliness is a "longing for death". In the same book, he quotes S. C. Gordon as advising a young lady to go ahead and marry, even if the event would shorten her mother's life, on the grounds that the shortening would be an act of kindness in hastening the sainted mother into her much desired state--death. Such a view is heathenish. Better murder the saint outright if death is so desirable as that. If suicide is wrong, then such inordinate desire for death is wrong also. Other-worldliness may take on an aspect of selfishness --a selfish desire to escape the plain duties of life. It may often be a mark of greater saintliness to desire to stay here and work than to go hence and play a harp.

There is no question but that many "holiness" people do their cause great harm by their inconsistency. He who claims this high privilege of perfect love must needs exercise great care lest he neutralize his profession by his daily life. Perhaps we have no right to dogmatize, yet we may reasonably expect some fruits of a sanctified life. Something must be wrong when a

man who professes to have arrived at this very high state, goes down to the polling booth and casts a ballot for rum. He may stoutly resent your disavowal of his sainthood and calmly and confidently refer you to his own inner life and his assurance of his close relationship to God--considerations which you may not be able to gainsay, but in which you will, nevertheless, be inclined to place but a small measure of confidence.

A minister in a certain western conference, professed sanctification and declared shortly after that he was so abandoned to God that he would take, without a murmur, any charge in the conference that God would give him. The bishop took him at his word and assigned him a $1500 charge. But this saint had had an eye upon another place that paid a substantially larger sum and was situated in a larger city. He therefore, refused to take the charge--perhaps on the ground that God didn't want him to have it, the bishop to the contrary notwithstanding!

It is stated that John Wesley's wife was sanctified. No wonder the good man is reported to have said that the Holy Spirit could get along with some people that he couldn't. The uncharitable spirit on the part of some "holiness" people is prima facie evidence of

their hypocrisy. Their lives give the lie to their professions.

But not only has perfection gotten into bad repute because of error in doctrine and inconsistency in life, but it has also suffered much from extremes in Scriptural interpretation. Various verses indulge in all kinds of exegetical gymnastics at the command of the saint. There are eccentricities of exegesis and interpretation that are almost beyond the imagination. They witness to the fact that almost any proposition is susceptible of Scriptural proof.

It is admitted by all that these extreme views, errors and eccentricities have created a certain prejudice against "holiness" advocates. Ordinary people are somewhat predisposed to reject claims that have even the semblance of extravagance. And it must be admitted that it is no far cry from a very sane and normal view on sanctification to a view that is so improbable as to be dangerously near the point of extravagance. It need scarcely be noted here that we do not condemn the whole because of the part. So far as possible, prejudice is set aside. Our consideration, we trust, will proceed in the clear light of sense and reason.

Having thus cleared away some of the preliminaries, we will pass on to the treatment of some of the main points at issue. The first of these will be a consideration of a topic that springs up quite naturally when we begin to examine the doctrine of sanctification, viz., the question of the existence of two distinct classes--the "ordinary believer" and the "saint". This immediately commands our interest and arrests our attention. Are there two distinct classes of Christians? We contend that this question is debatable.

In a certain mission some years ago, the superintendent preached a sermon on the usual subject for that place, viz., sanctification. He said in part, "Let us divide off this congregation by running a line down thru the center from front to back. We will say that all on the right are sanctified, sure of heaven, and will go there. But all on the left are Christians. These Christians are saved--on their way to heaven, but they will land in hell sure as fate unless they get over on the right side, i.e. sanctified." Aside from the self-contradictory assertion that one who is on his way to heaven will surely land in hell, almost any one would object to such an arbitrary and unreasonable classification. Such a procedure involves too much

high-handed and imperialistic dogmatism. We should like to demand his criteria. We should like to be shown the wherewithal of his authority.

It is a fact, however, that such a sharp line of demarkation is usually drawn, dividing the great body of Christians into two distinct classes. But has such a procedure any warrant either on rational or Scriptural grounds? The perfectionist declares that it has. Suspending our own judgment for the moment, we ask, "What then, pray, is the difference between an ordinary Christian, which we will designate as the 'believer', and the extraordinary Christian, which we will call the 'saint'?" The reply is somewhat to this effect: The believer is saved, justified, but sin is merely subdued, not eradicated (Peck). There is a residue of sin left in the soul. John Wesley taught this most explicitly as shown in his sermon, "Sin in Believers", and by his refutation of the Moravian heresy that the justified are free from sin. The saint, on the other hand, has no sin in the common acceptation of that term. Subsequent to his conversion he experienced sanctification and the residue of sin was wiped out. The main distinction then, seems to be that the believer is a sinner while the saint is not. A-

dapting a scheme given by another, we might put it thus: The sinner endures God's chastisements. The believer rejoices in God's chastisements. The saint does not even recall God's chastisements. What will be the ultimate condition of these two classes respectively? Reply: The Christian who dies before sanctification will go to heaven, but he will have an inferior seat and his harp will be somewhat small and tarnished. The saint also goes to heaven but he has the best there is. He has the best seat available and a fine bright new harp. He also is nearest the throne.

That such a procedure is productive of much error cannot be gainsaid. One untoward result is seen in the low estimate placed upon the Christian life as compared with the life of the saint. The inevitable impression left upon the mind by most books on "holiness" is that the ordinary Christian is scarcely better than the unregenerate sinner; while the perfectionist seems to believe that he has a monopoly upon superior goodness. He has cornered the "holiness" market, by the appropriation of certain graces and gifts that he deems his own exclusive property. This twofold result, viz., the undue depreciation of the Christian and the undue exaltation of the saint can be but little short of

pernicious in its effect. Were we to put this thing into actual practise, what else could we expect but the very lowest sort of Christian living on the part of the ordinary Christian man, and a practically impossible state of grace on the part of the saint?

A woman who had been a Christian for some years, heard a holiness preacher and then wrote to her former pastor, "The more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that a Christian ought to be holy!" This is truly remarkable! In all her previous years of Christian experience, she had evidently never considered that a Christian ought to be holy. Brengle, in "The Way of Holiness" says, "Some Christians put off seeking a clean heart." Vileness seems to be a necessary constituent of Christianity! This unhealthy and abnormal state of things must be regarded as due to the pernicious effect resulting from the sharp division of the great body of believers into two separate and distinct classes.

In the "Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness", there appeared, a few weeks ago, in the "Questions and Answers" column, a query and a reply, the subject matter of which was extremely interesting: "Do the bishops of the Methodist Church openly

profess a belief in holiness?" Reply: "Most of them do not. Some of them do not believe in holiness. Others do but are afraid to openly profess it. A few others believe it and are not afraid to day so"! Could anything be any more distorted, and fallacious than that? Such a process of reasoning leads to the inevitable conclusion that the majority of our bishops are immoral, believe in immorality, practise it and preach it. According to such a reply, we might expect our ministers to day, "Go out into sin, into unholy living, into vice. We do not believe in holiness!"

No doubt the"Witness" would find a flaw in our argument in the fact of a double meaning of the word "holiness". Their use of it means vastly more than our use of it. By "holiness" they mean entire sanctification, perfection--in short all that is obtained at the second blessing. By the same word, we mean freedom from impurity and immorality--in short, all the grosser sins. Most Christians would disclaim an answer framed in just that way; but the reply serves the purpose of strengthening our argument. What we are trying to show is the pernicious effect of this sharp line of demarkation which sets off the Christian from the saint. What right have "holiness" people to

assign a peculiar, almost alien, meaning to a word, appropriate it, with this new idea, to themselves exclusively, and then imperiously wave everyone else aside who may not feel that they properly come under this new designation of the word? What right have they to assert in effect, at least, that our bishops are "unholy"? This may not be a serious matter from their standpoint, but it certainly is from the standpoint of the majority of the people who use "holy" and "unholy" in the commonly accepted meaning of the terms. We contend that such a procedure is arbitrary and misleading, contrary to the laws of philology, and assumes a prerogative that does not exist.

We do not stand alone in this contention. Some writers upon this subject, whose word is well worth considering, to all appearances, seem to be of the same opinion. No less an authority than Dr. Mudge says, in his "Growth in Holiness", "There are no unholy children of God". Also, "Holiness applies to all Christians." Crane, in his "Holiness, the Birthright of All God's Children", leaves the distinct impression that holiness is the common property of all converted souls. He denies any residue of sin or depravity after conversion. Wm. Law, whose book on Christian per-

fection greatly influenced John Wesley, says, "Christian perfection is the highest and also the lowest that the gospel permits in any man." In addition to the above, we quote the following from Crane: "Wesley, Asbury, and Heading did not profess it(sanctification)." What is meant here is that these men claimed no special dispensation of grace above what any Christian may obtain. The statement is strong, but quite significant. Wesley's "Plain Account" leaves the impression that perfection is merely a high degree of Christian living and not anything peculiar, nor the special privilege of a favored few. We will revert to this shortly when we come to discuss the bearing of Wesley's definition of perfection on this phase of our subject.

From a rational and philosophical point of view, the "two-class" idea is a shaky one. The perfectionist often speaks of "full salvation". Is any salvation that <u>is</u> salvation, less than full? Can a man be half-saved, or three-quarters-saved? Some propositions admit of such a conception, as, for example, a man may be half-dressed or half-shaved, etc. But the essential qualities of salvation must of necessity eliminate any such conception in a fair consideration of this question. It is not difficult to find an analogy in a more

tangible sphere: A man is drowning. An expert swimmer attempte his rescue. Now, the drowning man is either saved or not saved. He may have a narrow escape. He may hover between life and death for weeks, but he either dies or lives. There is no such thing as being half-saved from drowning. In papular parlance, it is true, a man may be described as half dead; but that is a rhetorical expression, the obvious meaning of which is that the person has reached a point of extreme nearness to death, rather than that he is at some way-station where he is neither living nor dead. The half dead person always exhibits some signs of life. Can a man be half-born? Is it conceivable that he could arrive at some place where he is neither existent nor non-existent? If a man cannot be half-born physically, how can he be half-born spiritually? The question of the propriety of God's giving anything less than <u>full</u> salvation will come up in another connection.

Anything like a fair study of the cases of conversion given in the Bible would tend to cast some doubt on the methods of procedure which we are criticising at this time. An impartial reading of the several recitals of Paul's conversion ought to leave but little room for doubt as to the thoroughness of that

operation. Was Paul half-saved? Did he not give every evidence of full salvation? We do not hold that he was perfect nor that he ever claimed such for himself (quite the contrary, indeed); but it certainly is no misinterpretation of his plain words to say that Paul was saved to the uttermost. An unbiased reading of other cases must lead to the same inevitable conclusion.

In the next section we are to take up the question of the nature of perfection. But just here we need to note a definition or two that have been given to the word. "Perfection" as taught by John Wesley, is simply and solely a high level of Christian life, i. e., loving God with all the heart, mind, strength and soul. He "does not contend for the term sinless, nor object to it". Law's view of Christian perfection is whole devotion to God, i. e. being born again, renouncing the world, self denial, fighting corruption, holy conversation, avoiding pleasures and cares which grieve the Holy Spirit, a life of prayer, imitating the life and spirit of Jesus. It seems to be taken for granted that there is one common Christianity. All Christians are called to be as good as possible--"perfect", if you like that word. If perfection is only relative,

(and none but a bigoted fool will contend for absolute perfection) then all Christians are relatively perfect --all called to perfection. This point comes up for treatment later. Just now we desire to emphasize the fact that most of the recognized writers on the subject, though virtually dividing Christendom into two classes, yet, in the last analysis, seem to make that line a very dim and obscure one. True it is, that Wesley says that the difference between believer and saint is that the latter, (even though a greater sinner than the former,) longs for more grace while the other does not. And as noted above, Wesley taught a presence of sin in believers, implying none in the saint. It is also true that Steele gives no less than nine specific differences between regeneration and entire sanctification, thus making them absolutely distinct and setting off Christendom into two great classes. (Pp.27-33. Love Enthroned.) But when pressed for a definition of perfection, these men so qualify it as to annul virtually all their fine-wrought distinctions.

He who would candidly and fairly face all these facts and take into consideration the actual conditions that now obtain in the great body of Christian believers, must be forced to the inevitable conclusion that

there are all grades and classes of Christian people, from the very weakest babes in Christ to the strong, complete, adult, man, (perfect, if you like such a doubtful word). All these Christian classes taken together, constitute one common Christianity. "There are different degrees of holiness. We should labor to be as eminent in piety as we can."--Law. Even Steele, who, as shown above, by nine specific differences, contends so stoutly for the two classes, says, (P.8. Love Enthroned),"Dr. Payson thus beautifully illustrates the relation of various classes of Christians to Christ. He conceives them as ranged in concentric circles around the radiant form of our Immanuel." In a quotation from Dr. Payson following:- Those in the inner circle are nearest Christ, most devoted and happy; those in the next circle are near but not quite so close nor so devoted--occasionally their eyes wander from Him; those in the next circle have their gaze mostly on the world and only occasionally look to Christ. This expresses our view fairly well. Of course, the illustration does not go far enough, but the fact that three circles are conceived of gives room to suppose that Dr. Payson does not limit it to three and three only. And besides, is it not possible that of those in the inner

circle some might be a little nearer the throne than others?

While we are not quite ready to present our complete answer to the question which stands at the head of this paper, yet we state here and now our conclusion in regard to this one matter: In the great Christian body we have people who manifest an extraordinary degree of piety and holiness. We also have some who manifestly possess but the merest rudiments of Christianity, both as to doctrine and life. If they did not say that they believed in Jesus and were trying to follow Him, if they did not give evidence of being potential Christians, we should hardly call them Christians at all. Between these two extremes are Christian people of all degrees of holiness, of all shades of faith, of all kinds of experience, from the richest experience in the closest fellowship with Jesus to the poorest experience at the utmost possible remove (i.e. if a Christian) from Christ. On the other hand, we believe that to set Christians off into two great classes, justified and sanctified, and to say that all Christians are in one or the other, and further, that all the former are necessarily sinners and all the latter necessarily free from all sin, is

a piece of impudent dogmatism and unwarranted arbitrariness, which demands nothing but execration and for which there is no extenuation that can be named.

If it be replied that the objections urged against the "two classes" idea are multiplied many fold by the "many classes" idea, we deny the validity of any such argument on the following grounds: By our view; (1) Necessary sin is not imputed to any one of the various classes. (2) Necessary freedom from sin is not imputed to any one class. (3) All classes, the best as well as the worst, never being satisfied with their condition (since they are always less righteous than Christ) constantly strive onward to better things. None ever reach a state where they feel they are so good that they can go no further; for Christ is their goal. By the other view: (1) Necessary sin is imputed to the believer. (2) Necessary freedom from sin is imputed to the saint. (3) Perfection is made the special privilege of a favored few. (4) The smug satisfaction of the saint, which arises out of his consciousness of sinlessness, allows of no further advance on his part; while, on the other hand, the doctrine of "sin in Believers" either discourages the believer from attempting further progress, or leads him

into the error of thinking that he can live in sin and still continue in a state of salvation. We realize that all perfectionists will resent such an implication and stoutly maintain that they do just the opposite--they urge the believer to go on to perfection. We freely grant this. We were simply urging that the teaching that the great body of common Christian believers are saved, though they still be sinners, has the pernicious effect of making many satisfied with a life less holy than it ought to be.

We might note one other evil growing out of this doctrine of the two classes; its effect is seen to good advantage when Peck speaks of the enemies of perfection! Why are there enemies of perfection? Simply because Peck and others of his kind have placed a false emphasis upon this word by making it apply to a certain class, when, as a matter of fact, Christian perfection, defined as John Wesley defined it, is the common property of each and every Christian. If a man has anything less than perfection as there defined, then he is no Christian at all.

A definition of perfection is given in the preceding pages. Mention has been made of absolute and relative perfection and the qualifications attending

any expsition of this doctrine. We here propose to follow out this idea still further and answer more fully the question, "What is perfection?". That no very simple definition will fit the case for any large number of advocates will be very apparent before this discussion is ended. It is not our purpose to try to harmonize the different views of perfection, but to present them and see to what logical and necessary conclusion we will be forced to come.

In ordinary parlance, the word "perfection" denotes a very high degree of goodness. We speak of a perfect sunset, a perfect flower, a perfect painting. What we mean is not absolute perfection, but only a high degree of excellence. No one would be disposed to quarrel with us if, on close examination, it was found that some imperfection was traceable in the particular sunset, flower or painting. Perhaps it is somewhat unfortunate that the same charity which allows certain imperfections in so-called perfect objects about us, is so conspicuous by its absence when we apply the term, "perfect" to represent a high degree of excellence in Christian living. However, there may be some reasons for this. The first may be found in the necessarily <u>subjective</u> character of

Christian perfection. He who would not be taken to task for calling a flower or a picture perfect, would most likely be condemned if he called himself perfect, whether he were referring to a perfect physique or to a perfect character. We have said "necessarily subjective character of Christian perfection", because from the very nature of the case, the subject must be the one to declare his spiritual state. His competency to judge himself is limited, to be sure, but is, nevertheless, greater than any other. So, generally speaking, each man is called upn to declare his own superior excellence, and that in itself--this subjectivity--immediately puts his "perfection" in an unfavorable light.

Another reason may be found in the abstract, intangible, nature of the thing with which we are dealing. We may call a concrete object perfect, but how about an entity so intangible and abstract as a man's character? Such abstract entities are wary of close scrutiny and precise definition. It is easy to be definite when locating the boundary line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, but not so easy to determine the boundary line which marks off the day from the night; for the one shades off into the other by almost imperceptible

tible gradations;;and an exact and definite boundary can be established only by a procedure more or less arbitrary. To determine the exact spot where a brook ceases to be a brook and becomes a river can only be accomplished in the same arbitrary manner. So it is with the Christian character. A declaration to the effect that any particular character is perfect, on the very face of it is a statement, which, by its very nature, arouses some legitimate doubt.

Still another reason may be discovered in the fact that we are dealing with a moral situation--and a moral situation involves a good deal more than an unmoral situation. If I mistake in calling the flower perfect, no harm is done;;but if I mistake in calling myself perfect, I am likely to bring myself and the whole doctrine of perfection into disrepute. One may wonder why the mistake in the one case is overlooked and not in the other. The answer is probably to be found in the fact of the possibility of appeal in the case of the flower while no such possibility exists in the case of the professor of "perfection." At least he may deny any appeal in his own case but dare not deny it in the other. As to his competency to judge himself--this will be taken up later . The point we

are here making is that the personal profession of any peculiarly superior grace, in itself, gives ground for some mistrust. Let us seek to answer our question, "What is perfection??.

One thing that strikes us at the outset of our study as being rather remarkable, is the very loose construction given to the idea expressed by the words, "perfection", "holiness", "sanctification", etc. Absolute terms to describe this high Christian state are wanting in practically all books on the subject. It seems that all sane advocates of Christian perfection are extremely careful to avoid even the semblance of absoluteness. On the contrary, even the most stanch devotees of holiness make surprising qualifications. Indeed, the word, "perfection" is so qualified and limited in most books on the subject, as to rob it of any very special significance. The qualifying adjectives used in connection with it are really inconsistent with the true definition of the word. The result is a conjunction of terms which are well nigh self-contradictory. Steele, (P. 3) speaks of the "higher (not highest) Christian life." Also(P. 4) on "advanced Christian experience." Again, (P.7) he tells how he, before his sanctification, "criticised the pro-

fessors of this grace, magnifying their imperfections" etc. Again, (P. 12) "Absolute perfection ascribed only to God, and not to beings capable of progress." Once more, (P. 12) "There may be many imperfections and defects intermingled (with evangelical perfection)". And on page 16, "The human soul at its best earthly state under grace is shattered by infirmities and incurable imperfections." One ought to be pardoned for exclaiming at this point, "What, under the canopy, is imperfect perfection! How can any sensible man juggle these two terms in such a manner!" Peck, one of the most zealous devotees of holiness, evidently does not think that his argument suffers any injury when he makes such statements as these: Perfect as far as we are capable in this life!!! "Perfection is not a perfect compliance with all the requisitions of the covenant of works." (P. 41). In his address to the saints he says, "Beware of spiritual pride!!!" On page 273 he says, "Christian perfection is not a perfect obedience to the moral law because it would preclude the necessity of forgiveness and confession of sin." This last is exceedingly interesting. According to this statement, a perfect man must be a sinner. Peck covers many pages in trying to prove the possibility of per-

fection, but this one statement would seem to neutralize and invalidate about all that he says. If this is a fit description of a perfect man, one begins to wonder where the ordinary Christian comes in. He must, indeed, be on an exceedingly low plane, if he stands at any distance at all below the level of the perfect man, as therein described by Peck.

Most writers on the subject of Christian perfection seek to avoid misunderstandings by attempting to make, at the outset, a clear distinction between absolute and relative perfection. Absolute perfection is that predicated of God. Relative perfection is that predicated of man. Relative perfection is commonly described as living up to all light, loving God with all our several powers, a superior degree of piety, a very high state of Christian living, extraordinary devotion, especially eminent in saintliness. It is seen that the terms employed carefully avoid anything bordering on the absolute. All sensible holiness people disclaim absolute perfection. "If we speak of absolute perfection, then we couldn't repeat the Lord's prayer." Wesley says there is no absolute perfection in this life. "Absolute perfection only in heaven."--Bates. Dr. Mudge puts the matter in a way so concrete

as to be almost uncanny. He says we are ever approaching an ever receding boundary. Just as .99999999 always approaches but never equals 1, so a man may always approach absolute perfection, but never reach it.

We wonder if the advocates of perfection realize the incompatibility of the expression, "relative" perfection with other terms used by them to represent the same thing. The description of perfection as given above with its many qualifications and concessions, is scarcely compatible with other practically absolute expressions. One might be pardoned for supposing that the term, "sanctification" meant a good deal more than the very liberal and indefinite meaning given to perfection above. And when this word is further strengthened by the adjective, "entire", we are certainly justified in concluding that it denotes a state much beyond the "relative" perfection described above. In other words, a person who is sanctified must be more than "relatively" perfect; and we cannot see how the "entirely" sanctified person can be much short of absolute perfection. "Sanctification" may admit of some qualifications, but certainly not to such an extent as "perfection"; and we fail to see how "entire sanctification" can be qualified at all. Yet this express-

ion is used constantly by perfectionists to denote that high state known as "holiness".

The danger of using such a term as "relative" perfection is seen again in the fact that it is <u>too</u> broad --definite limits can scarcely be set to it, unless we destroy the quality of "relativity". "We do not hold an absolutely sinless state attainable in this life." --Peck, P. 385f. n. 8. If not absolute, then what? Relative? But if only relative, how far can we go? On such a working basis as that almost any one could claim perfection. A heathen in Africa is relatively perfect if he lives up to all the light he has. By the same process of reasoning, saloonkeepers and white-slavers might reasonably declare themselves perfect--<u>relatively</u> speaking. All Christians may be (we don't say <u>all</u> are) relatively perfect--and that too, whether they are sanctified or not. Indeed, all unsanctified Christians <u>are</u> relatively perfect, if they live up to all the light they have. The weakest babe in Christ may be relatively perfect and yet no one would think for a moment of calling him "entirely sanctified".

This quality of relativity in perfection is, furthermore, suicidal in its tendency--it kills its own arguments. Wesley's convincing argument for perfection

as given above, viz., 1. That we desirs to be freed from all sin;;2. That we believe God gave us that desi sire; 3. We pray for such; 4. If it is not attainable in this life, we are fools to pray for it,--is rendered absolutely invalid by the doctrine of relativity in perfection. A man freed from all sin is not relatively perfect. He is perfect. Wesley annuls a good deal of his "Plain Account" by his definition of perfection as merely a high state of Christian living. P Peck covers hundreds of pages to prove that we can be entirely sanctified, freed from all sin;--"Deliver us from evil" means all evil, he declares--and then spoils it all by saying that "perfect obedience would preclude the necessity of forgiveness and confession of sin".

Some have thought to escape wreck on the Scylla of "absoluteness" and the Charybdis of "relativity" by a mediating theory which apparently accomplished its purpose but really sinks in deep water half-way between these two. I have seen this theory only in Macdonald's "Scriptural Way of Holiness". He states it thus: God's perfection and ours are alike in quality but not in quantity. A drop of water from the ocean is not the ocean but possesses the same qualities

as the ocean. This theory seeks to avoid absolute perfection on the ground of quantity and relative perfection on the ground of quality. Such a theory cuts the Gordian knot but does not untie it. The argument has the fault of proving too much. If the author has succeeding in proving his perfection to be neither absolute nor relative, he has gone further than he thought; for he has proved that there is no perfection of either kind.

In advancing their grounds for belief in entire sanctification, few advocates fail to bring to bear upon their argument, the sovereignty and omnipotence of God. Let a disclaimer insinuate that entire sanctifcation in impossible in this life and the perfectionist is horror-struck at the idea. To them it is a blasphemous affront to God. If one desires entire sanctification, God can and will grant it when the proper conditions are met. But these same perfectionists are guilty of as bold and equally blasphemous an affront to the Almighty when they deny the possibility of absolute perfection. We have a right to ask why the God who is able to make perfect in the relative sense is not able to do so in the absolute sense. It is inconsistent to quote Paul to the effect that "God

is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think", when crying for relative perfection and then limit God's power so as to exclude the possibility of absolute perfection. We are not pleading for absolute perfection--quite the contrary, indeed--

but we are pleading for consistency. If appeal to God's power be made in the one case, it may be made with equal propriety in the other.

We do not claim to have answered the question, "What is perfection?", but we have presented some various views on the subject as given by qualified authors and have held these views up in the light of sound philosophy and clear reasoning.

In a preceding section we treated at some length the question of the propriety of drawing a sharp line of demarkation , thus dividing Christendom into two distinct classes. We had occasion to refer incidentally to the idea of the second blessing, this being the distinguishing mark which determines into what class any one person should be placed. The same objections urged against this two-fold division may be lodged against the idea of the second blessing, viz., that it is an arbitrary procedure in that it limits the num-

ber of blessings; is unscientific in its exclusive ascription of peculiar emphasis and importance to one particular experience; is contrary to the facts as brought out by the testimony of properly accredited persons. The "two blessings" idea is closely allied to the "two classes of Christians" idea. Indeed, the latter really grows out of the former. In as small a space as possible we will review some interesting points pertaining to this matter.

In reports of holiness revivals, one often reads "so many saved and so many sanctified". In other words, "so many received the first blessing and so many received the second blessing." But why stop? Why not go on and tabulate the number of those receiving the third, fourth, fifth and sixth blessings? Why not invent more terms to represent these various stages? Why not "saved for the first blessing, sanctified for the second, super-sanctified for the third, glorified for the fourth, and entirely glorified for the fifth? We are not scoffing. The question we ask is a just one. Steele (see above) gives nine distinct and specific differences which mark off the man of one blessing from the man of two. Why not nine specific differences to mark off the man of two from the man of three, and

the man of three from the man of four? We claim that these questions are also just.

In a perusal of Dr. Mudge's "The Saintly Calling", we were struck with the conspicuous absence of any reference to the second blessing, although the book is a spiritual biography of some of the most eminent saints. Indeed, specific utterances in the book militate decisively against the idea of any such importance attaching to the second blessing as is given above. C. G. Finney had three distinct blessings, one in 1821, another in 1837, a third in 1843. No doubt he had scores of other blessings but these three were particularly crisal in their influence. Moody had five great blessings at least, perhaps more. The later blessings were greater crises in his life than the second. Olin had four. Dr. Mudge himself, as he tells us, had a great number of blessings. Without a doubt, Finney, Moody, Olin, Mudge and a host of others would declare their belief in the second blessing and in the forty-second as well. Moody would be more enthusiastic over his fourth or fifth than over his second.

Some, who dislike the idea of second blessing, ask rather contemptuously, "Does God have to take two hitches to save a man?" That may be a bit blunt but

it is a fair rejoinder to the representations made by some on this subject. The justified soul is often represented as but slightly better than the gross sinner. Wesley declared and reiterated in no uncertain manner that there is sin in believers. If we can take, at anything like a fair evaluation, the description of the justified state, we shall feel no compunction of conscience in propounding the blunt query as above.

The teaching of Scripture on this point is to be taken up at a later stage. But it will not be out of place to note here the supreme importance attached to conversion and the lack of any direct and specific reference to a second work of grace, especially as seen in the cases of conversion as reported by the sacred writers. For example, Paul makes much of that great crises on the Damascus road. We know the time even to the hour of the day. The circumstances, with many minute details, are recorded more than once in different connections. But when was Paul sanctified? If the second blessing is all that some have claimed for it, Paul must certainly have passed through that experience, and yet there is no record that he did. We know neither the day nor the hour. The simplest conclusion is that Paul, after his conversion, went on

from strength with many crises and blessings, never counting himself to have apprehended nor to have attained, nor to have been made perfect, but always striving for greater blessings and more purity and devotion. The above is not to be taken as our final word in this matter. All that we have attempted here is to present the questions and difficulties that naturally arise in connection with this topic.

Another very important question which comes up for discussion at this point is suggested by the statement, often made, that the two acts, justification and sanctification, can never be synchronous. Macdonald contends for this view. Another says, "Sanctification must come after justification." Steele and most advocates hold the same opinion. It is, of course, only logical and consistent for the advocates of the two classes of Christians and the second blessing to contend that the two experiences cannot come at the same time. A second blessing necessarily involves the elemet of time, else it would not be second. John Wesley contended for this same idea. Indeed, he was somewhat incredulous in regard to a case where the two experiences had but a short interval between them; and his incrudulity was removed only when he had satisfied

himself, by a personal investigation, that such was the case. He seemed to be of the opinion that some considerable time must elapse between the two works of grace.

Now, such a doctrine leads us into interminable difficulty. In fact, the very writers who argue most convincingly for this necesary time element, involve themselves in much self-contradiction; for they as stoutly maintain the immediateness of full salvation, and quote Scripture to prove that "now is the accepted time." Maccdonald, one of the stanchest defenders of the time element, nevertheless, pleads for instantaneous sanctification and declares that God can and will perform this work of grace at once. If that is so, then why can't God do it at conversion? That sanctification may follow conversion, no one will be disposed to deny; that it must is an insult to Deity. Is God so straightened as that? If even a single moment of time must necessarily elapse, God is dishonored, the Scriptures mocked, and the Christian robbed of his freedom. If God so desired, He could sanctify the worst sinner without any intermediate step at all. It may be argued that God does not usually work that way. But custom is not to be accepted as a criterion in this matter. Besides, there are doubtless hundreds of people who will testi-

fy to having received in one and the same experience and at one and the same time, all that perfectionists include in both justification and sanctification.

Teachers of perfection, in general, believe in growth in grace even after sanctification. Viewed from one angle, this doctrine of perfection would admit of no such process. But viewed in the light of the concessions and qualifications made , perfection can consistently leave room for growth. The many imperfections as noted by Steele (Pp. 7, 16), the sins of the saint as pointed out by Law, the relativity of perfection admitted by all,--these certainly give opportunity for improvement. Growth naturely precludes any possibility of absolute perfection. No advocate of perfection will argue for an advanced ground where we may safely stop. "As soon as we stop at any degree of goodness, we put an end to our goodness. Our highest improvement is a state of great imperfection," says Wm. Law, who argues that holiness must be predicated of all God's children. For any one to have assumed to have reached the top would be as unwarranted as for an aviator to declare that he had reached the uttermost height to which man can fly. He may have gone further than any other, but that is far from saying or proving that

he had gone further than any other will ever go.

In the foregoing, but little appeal was made to Holy Writ. We are now ready to make an examination of Scripture with a view to finding out its general import on this question. At the outset, let it be understood that we care but little for proof texts cited by either the advocates or disclaimers of perfection. We believe in the inspiration of the Bible, but we do not believe that inspiration covers mistranslations, mistakes, or blunders of printers. It adds but little to an argument to appeal to competent Hebrew grammarians in the attempt to prove that Eccl. 7:20 is more properly rendered "may not sin", rather than as in the A. V., "sinneth not." If a single verse stands out in open contradiction to the general teaching of Scripture, it is only the part of common sense to accept the latter as the true teaching. By the proof-text method, any brewer or saloon-keeper in the land could prove from Prov. 31:6, 7, that his business supplied a just need and was not only perfectly legitimate, but approved by God in His Holy Word. A like use of a single word, such as "saint," is still more perilous. Our purpose then, is not to spend hours in a critical study of fine, hair-split points of exe-

gesis and interpretation, but to obtain the general teaching of Scripture on soteriology.

What is the general impression gained by a reading of the Bible? Suppose a man who had never heard of our Gospel plan of salvation, should be given a Bible and told to read it through. He would probably be impressed first with the sovereignty and creatorship of God. Reading further, he would see God as a rather stern and harsh law-giver. In the prophets he would begin to discern God as a Father, full of love for His children. Passing to the New Testament, he would behold a wonderful plan of salvation. Through the Gospels and Epistles it would be made plain to him that Christ was the Savior of the world. If he desired salvation, he would conclude that he must first of all believe in God, His greatness, goodness and love. Then he must believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son. But would that be sufficient? Reading the story of Zacchaeus, of Nicodemus, of the Samaritan woman, the call of Matthew and the other apostles, Paul's marvelous conversion, and like things, he would become convinced that to believe Jesus was to follow Him, and to follow meant that he would experience an inner change. Careful study would reveal to him the heinousness of sin

and the desirableness of sinlessness. Should he determine to be a Gospel Christian, he could not but well understand that God required his all. Suppose he decides for Christ. He becomes a Christian, but continues his study and receives day by day more light. He strives to live up to this new light. He prays, and often in prayer he receives peculiar blessings like unto that which Paul got on the Damascus road. He finds an absolutely perfect standard in Jesus and is told (Mat. 5:48) to strive to attain to that standard. He reads Paul's letters addressed to saints--a Bible saint is a man of very eminent piety. He seeks for such for himself. He grows and grows in grace.

Now, let a human being come to this man and tell him that he must seek a higher work of grace--the second blessing which will sanctify him--that he is now in sin but sanctification will free him from sin, that to be a Christian is good but to be a saint is better--what happens? The man would have a right to demand the Scriptural basis for such a theory, and it is far from likely that he would be satisfied with citations, such as commands to be perfect, or prayers for perfection, or Paul's frequent use of the word saint, or any other like thing. He might well declare that

he had given his all to Christ and had held nothing back. How could he give more? He would have a right to demand that this teaching be as clearly laid down in Scripture as that touching upon regeneration. He must hear Christ say to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again (regeneration) and then be born once more (sanctification)!" He must be able to read in the Bible, Paul's marvelous deliverance from the state of a common believer to that of a sanctified soul. Failing to secure all this, he might, with propriety, refuse to believe this special doctrine. Asked if he did not believe that he should be better than he is, he would reply in the affirmative and state that he expected to grow in grace to the end of his days. It is but following the dictates of reason and common sense to suppose that all this would be the natural order of things.

The only other point we wish to make, alluded to in another connection, is the untenable assumptions and conclusions made in reference to Scripture by some zealous advocates when they have a pet theory to prove. To say that the seventh of Romans does not apply to Paul; to graft on to Biblical words meanings that are foreign to them; to allow the present meaning of a word to bias the plain import of the word as

used in Scripture; to distort Scriptural passages--all such procedures call for the severest condemnation. No one gains anything by such a process, yet these things are constantly being done. Certain sects have harped on "holiness" until it is so badly warped in meaning that common folks fight shy of using it. And yet it has a beautiful Biblical usage. It is poor sense and worse judgment to assume that fanatic "holiness" and Biblical holiness are equivalent. If it is necessary to remember that Wesley used the word "enthusiasm" in exactly the same sense in which we use the word "fanaticism" today, how much more necessary is it to remember that Biblical words have also changed in meaning very much during the centuries.

The warrantableness of the personal profession of entire sanctification will depend very largely on the settlement of the question of an assurance of this state to the professor. If it can be proved to the satisfaction of a majority, at least, that such assurance is a possibility, then a good deal will have to be conceded to those who maintain its warrantability. If the opposite, however , can be made reasonably certain, a point has been made for those who deny its warrantability. Even though the possession of entire

sanctification in this life might be proved to a demonstration, yet that would not establish the warrantableness of its personal profession, if it could also be proved to a demonstration that assurance of the fact is wanting. Dr. Mudge in "Growth in Holiness", says, "No one is a proper judge in his own case." We agree with this sentiment and add that any one else would certainly be less able to judge.

The best putting of the case is found in Dr. Sheldon's "System of Christian Doctrine". (Pp. 474-6). "It (consciousness) may assure him that he is a child of God, but not that he is a perfected child. Only by revelation from an omnicient source can he know that there is no remnant of sinful tendency beneath consciousness. The fact of entire sanctification can be certified by nothing except this special revelation. .....Is it a part of the divine economy to grant this special revelation? The Scriptures have not informed us that it is. While they teach that the Holy Spirit testifies to sonship, they do not teach that He testifies to perfection in sonship. .....A scriptural warrant being thus wanting for the fact of the revelation in question," etc. This seems to be conclusive that any positive assurance as to entire sanctifi-

cation is wholly lacking. To be sure, there is, as Dr. Sheldon points out, the testimony of Christians to this fact, but this is an extremely doubtful criterion. "Testimony of consciousness cannot render a perfectly complete account of man's spiritual condition." There are few, if any, Christians who would care to claim the possession of such perfect self-knowledge as to be able to scrutinize their spiritual state down "to the last item of their personality." While we would not dogmatically impute a dishonest motive to any such persons, yet, in the light of the experience of thousands, we would be inclined to think that they were mistaken. Spiritual verities will scarcely admit of such absolutely positive and decisive investigation. And even supposing that they did, who is properly qualified to judge them?

One reading the above pages would be pardoned for wondering whether the writer himself knows what he does believe. It should be stated here that no attempt has, up to the present point, been made to state our beliefs and opinions on the subject at hand in any logical or concise form. The preceding has, for the most part, been a presentation of various views, and discussions relating thereto. Such personal opinion

as has been expressed was somewhat incidental. We hope such opinion has been logical and consistent, however much the various discussions seemed to contradict each other. No attempt was made to harmonize them. We have pointed out the weaknesses of many theories without presenting a substitute. Of necessity, some repetition obtains in the following presentations of our views.

A statement which meets with our hearty approval is one made by Dr. Birney, relative to what he calls the "higher Christian life". He says: "However one may state it theologically, it must be admitted that there is a range of Christian consecration and experience, open to all but obtained by comparitively few". This is an extremely wise putting of the case. It affirms neither too much nor too little. It is rational, in harmony with Scripture and sensible. But to go more into detail, we state our view thus: Any man who renounces the Devil and all his works, and who by faith turns to Jesus Christ as his only Savior, and is converted and strives earnestly to live as he believes Jesus would have him live, is a Christian. We do not care to apply to nor to withhold from such a one such a doubtful, strife-bearing word as "perfect". We believe that this man ought to have a definite Christian

experience. It may be crisal--a gigantic upheaval--or it may be the gradual unfolding of Christ to his soul, as the morning dawneth unto the perfect day. During this man's life, if he lives up to his light, he will have numerous crises--blessings--times of especial refreshing before the Lord. All during his life he will desire more and more of favor and grace on the part of his Lord, and more and more devotion and service on the part of himself. He will realize all along that there is a range af Christian experience far above what he has yet attained and he will strive toward this high goal. He may make gradual progress for years and then at a crisal point seem to leap suddenly upward to a much higher plane. He will, if faithful, receive a baptism of power which will grow and make him an active soul-winner. He may become very eminent for his piety; but he will never reach the end of his goodness. Such an experience we believe to be the normal, healthy Christian life.

The abuse of the word"perfection"has rendered it obnoxious. Standing alone it manifestly implies a finished, completed state. Qualified, as it always is, it is self-contradictory. He who uses the expression, "imperfect perfection", by implication or otherwise,

indulges in "self-contradictory babbling". "Entire sanctification" is no better--rather worse. It admits of no such qualifications and yet it is constantly used to denote "qualified perfection". In short, any term, word or expressions, which have been flavored with an alien meaning on account of close association with fanaticism and abused by an exclusive appropriation by certain select classes, had better be used judiciously. If one wishes to express that state which so few attain, let him use the expression, "higher Christian life", or "fulness of the Spirit", or such like.

We deny that Christians are in two great bodies separate and distinct from each other. This imputes necessary sin to believers which is unchristian, and necessary sinlessness to saints which is falsehood. We hold that the army of Jesus Christ contains all grades, from the commander-in-chief to the humblest private in the rear ranks. All are marching to heaven under the banner of Jesus Christ. All the faithful are continually advancing from a lower to a higher rank. All come short of the glory of God, even the best. All the faithful have all their past sins forgiven. Probably all daily commit sins for which they

must ask forgiveness. There is no guarantee to any that he will not sin. God gives to none a stock of holiness upon which he may draw.

What was said about the second blessing above need only be reiterated here in condensed form. Special significance may or may not attach to a work of grace following conversion. The special blessing may be the third, fourth, fifth, forth-second or the one hundred and forty-second. Some men will have two such special crises, others will have more. Many will have one. Still others may have no special crisis and yet all be Christians. This leads us to say that justification and that experience which is termed sanctification by advocates of the second work, may, and often does come, at one and the same time. God doesn't have to wait. This is simply another way of saying that a man may seek forgiveness of sins and purity of heart at the same time and obtain both in the same moment. That which for one man is given in two works of grace may be given to another in one blessing.

No doubt room for criticism will be found in the implied belief that entire sanctification is not attained in this life. Attention is called to the fact of the great difference between "attainable" and "at-

tained". Entire sanctification may be attainable, perhaps is, but is not attained. A thousand years ago, telegraphic communication was an attainable feat but it was not attained. A trip to the moon has never been attained but it may be attainable. Accomplishment of this feat is all that is required to prove its attainableness. So, absolutely entire sanctification may or may not be attainable in this life, but the fact remains that no man has yet appeared on earth who has approached, even in a remote degree, the sanctity and purity of the one ideally perfect man, Jesus Christ.

The previous examination of Scripture need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the plain import of the Bible is to the effect that man is always imperfect in practise, however perfect he may be in intention.

Besides the above, there are several specific and conclusive grounds which may be urged against the personal profession of entire sanctification. 1. It is incompatible with practical life as lived upon earth. Cannot all pray, as in our communion ritual, the prayer in which we "bewail our manifold sins and wickedness"? Could a man say he had no sins to bewail? Would any bishop presume to ask our young ministers

if they were perfect? Would the ministers dare answere in the affirmative? 2. There is no assurance on any grounds, Scriptural or otherwise, that the fact of entire sanctification will be revealed to any one. Since this is so, how can any one personally profess it? 3. "The most genuine saint is wont to be unaware of his sainthood". The most holy men of all ages from St. Francis of Assisi to Daniel Steele have carefully avoided making any claims to distinct assurance of entire sanctification. If testimony is of any value, this ought to have weight. Men may be "aware of a conscience void of offense toward God" but that is about the farthest that even the most holy would care to go.

It has seemed, no doubt, like a far cry from the question as propounded in the title of this paper, to the answer to which we have come. But there was much ground to cover and even at this length, we have brushed many things aside and only lightly touched many others.

Lest unfair judgment be rendered against the views here set forth, let the question at issue be clearly understood, viz., the warrantableness of the personal profession of entire sanctification. We do

not hold its unattainability in this life, but most emphatically do we maintain that its personal profession is unwarrantable.

A speaker, from a certain platform, once said, "All boys are bad". A short time later, another speaker, from the same platform, said, "There are no bad boys". They both meant exactly the same thing. This is analogous , we think, to certain apparently mutually exclusive antitheses in regard to the matter of perfection. The advocate stoutly asserts it. The disclaimer denies it. Then the former qualifies and explains. His perfection is really nothing more or less than loving God with all one's powers. The disclaimer also explains. He does not mean that man cannot be perfect in intention, but only that he errs and sins in practise. Both believe in the higher Christian life. In truth, generally speaking, the beliefs of both are not far from being practically identical.