

THE  
**Sin**

**PROBLEM**

H. V. MILLER

*Wilkes*

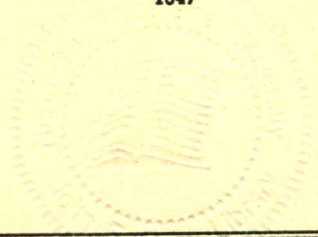
*THE SIN PROBLEM*

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# *The Sin Problem*

by  
H. V. Miller, D. D.

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This revised and slightly enlarged edition is offered with the hope that it may help others toward a clearer understanding of the greatest of all human problems—that of sin.

H. V. M.



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*Also by H. V. Miller*

THE GLADNESS OF GOD

WHEN HE IS COME

## INTRODUCTION

When one has found a cure for the sin problem his major difficulty in life has been solved. Through the solution of this major problem he is brought into a right relationship with God, with himself, and with everything that is right and holy in the realm of earthly existence. Having all sin removed from the heart, man's nature is harmonized with the nature of God and He finds the true center around which to organize a satisfying and useful life. It is certain that no one will ever find a solution for the sin problem until he honestly and conscientiously faces not only sin indeed, but the fact of sin within his nature, and through faith appropriates God's provisions for complete deliverance from it. Dr. H. V. Miller is well qualified to discuss the different phases of the subject presented in this booklet. He has had intimate contact with leaders of different theological schools of thought and has had years of experience as district superintendent, pastor, and general superintendent in our own denomination. He has given much thought to the sin problem and presents a discussion of this question that is worthy of more than a casual reading. Subjects often overlooked by holiness preachers are dealt with and the writer clearly states what we believe to be the scriptural position on such themes as "Eradication," "Suppression," and "Counteraction." The message of this booklet will be welcomed by all lovers of the doctrine of entire sanctification and all who will carefully read these pages will find not only food for thought but material for devotional meditation. It is hoped that it will be widely read by those not of the distinctly holiness groups.

D. SHELBY CORLETT

Chapter One

*The Fact of Sin*



## CHAPTER I

### THE FACT OF SIN

Humanity no longer able, in the vernacular of the sea, to box the compass of moral direction, we cannot take too much for granted in the discussion of spiritual problems. The very term "spiritual" itself, once pertinent and meaningful, has long since been broadened to an almost unbelievable comprehensiveness. It no longer refers merely to the inner nature of man and his vital relation to Deity, but rather often hides a multitude of ethical cant. It is now quite a common thing to hear prominent speakers refer to the most common values of life as spiritual qualities thereby ignoring those deeper and genuine spiritual facts.

Sin is a strange term to modern thinking, a misnomer in modern speech. In the old-fashioned days, sin meant the violation of God's love and law. It included antagonism toward a finely fibered social fabric, but now sin is out of date. Professed intellectuality states plainly and boldly that the moral conceptions of the past were too highly colored with pagan superstition and were crudely unscientific; that now in this day of research and brilliant discovery in the several branches of science we should no longer undignify humanity with references to sin and its behavior. It is now superiority and inferiority complexes, various forms of mania, glandular reaction, yes even "the worm striving to be God," the growing pains of evolution, mutation of chemical change. Yet the awful fact of sin still stares man hideously in the face. It is written in his every act and deed.

Its sharp talons still cling cruelly to his human flesh and spirit.

By multiplied means Satan has endeavored to obscure that awful stroke that unbalanced the human race. It would be superfluous for one to endeavor to recount his zealous and untiring efforts, and although his attack has shifted through the centuries past, his supreme objective has ever been the same—a bald denial of sin.<sup>1</sup>

What the world needs today beyond all else is a renewed conception of sin. Sin has become too common. A proper sense of sin is the balance wheel of good society. Truly did Dr. Parker say, "Jesus Christ cannot be understood until sin is understood." It is of little use to point men to a Saviour when they have nothing to be saved from. To such the cross of Christ is but an overwrought spectacle, a bit of pagan mysticism. To such, religious ardor and faith are either the reflex of pagan superstition or the crudity of an underdeveloped mentality. What a challenge there is for a revival of preaching against sin and its horrors in this present hour of human experience! Uncertain trumpets fill many pulpits of the land looking askance at one who would raise the voice of alarm. A so-called social gospel and religious education without a Christ eases the conscience of the well-to-do while its tepid touch brings only indifference from the multitudes of common people. The world at large today is not only immoral but is unmoral as well.

But when the excruciating consciousness of sin and its terror flashes upon a human heart for the first time, the dim and colorless outline of Calvary is suddenly changed to a scene eloquent with hope encircled with the rainbow of God's promise to a despairing soul. It is

<sup>1</sup> Since this was first written several prominent religious philosophers have swung to the opposite position. They now admit universal depravity but leave the reader with little hope of deliverance.

then the soul rises to its greatest heights of spiritual capacity and appreciation, grasping a well-nigh incomprehensible sense of eternal truth that can express itself only in the words of the poet:

When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine  
That were a present far too small,  
Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

There is but One who really understands sin, and that is God. If we could look through His eyes and see sin as He sees it, how our hearts would burn within us! If our hearts could beat with His own, how our spirits would be wrung with anguish as we look upon sin's cruel dominion over men! Surely a cry to God for a glimpse of the awfulness of sin is a proper plea for a human heart. There is at least one reason for the insipidness of the modern pulpit—a well-nigh total absence of warning of the consequences of sin. There is at least one reason for the appalling listlessness of the pew today—the lack of a vision of sin.

There are two experiences in the life of our Lord which reveal to us with tremendous force the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is here, at least, that we can see sin through the eyes of Deity. The first is that scene which the scripture describes with those words, "Jesus wept." What soul-stirring words! There He stood over against the tomb of a beloved friend, that of Lazarus. Why did He weep thus? Was it from a heart of sympathy and yearning tenderness for those two precious heartbroken

sisters? True, He was moved by their grief as He is yet moved by our grief and touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but this was not the reason He wept for He knew in a moment of time that Lazarus would again stand forth in their midst. Did He weep for the friends of Lazarus? Yes, but far greater was His grief than this. He wept when He saw personified in Lazarus the devastation of sin. God weeping over the havoc of sin! Jesus saw the tombs of the centuries in that one concrete instance. He saw the stroke that had unbalanced the human race. He saw its sweeping scourge as it leaped from decade to decade, from century to century until every creature had felt the awful sting. We are all kin. Sin is a contagion so virulent that it leaves its smirch at birth. David caught a fleeting glimpse that day in his own horrible act as he cried, "In sin did my mother conceive me!" Educational barriers cannot impede it. Mountains of gold cannot isolate it. Moral restraint cannot check it. On, on through the centuries it sweeps with horrible malignancy.

Dr. A. T. Pierson used to tell an incident filled with pathos which but faintly visualizes the awfulness of sin. A terrible plague had swept through a community until death was everywhere. There was no time for decent burial but rather bodies were heaped in trenches in rough boxes and funeral trains passed wearily all the day through. At last the plague subsided. An investigation ensued. The beginnings of the dreadful plague were at last traced back to a one-time happy home. All had been swept away except two heartbroken souls. The verdict of the authorities was finally reached and this unfortunate home was compelled to bear even more. The two remaining members of the home were informed that the building would have to be burned and they themselves could leave only under the strictest surveillance. They must leave all behind. Bowing before the dictate of the

law they left with every appearance of obedience to the welfare of the community. Shortly after, the plague broke out again. Startled and shocked the authorities endeavored to trace down the cause only to learn that the two members of the home had carried away secretly a tiny pillow. They had longed for a tie to the memories of the past little realizing that there lurked within that pillow millions of tiny germs that would again bring havoc and death. This touching instance but illustrates the virulency and devastation of the curse of sin. Jesus was weeping that day over the devastation of sin.

Again we see Him in the garden. He had left the disciples yonder. Mark gives us the record in the fourteenth chapter of his Gospel. "He began to be sore amazed." Luther said these words were to him the most astonishing in the whole Bible. It was sin that sore amazed Him. He was now looking into the depths of sin. He had wept over sin as He had seen its awful and terrific sweep. He had watched its hellish duplicity as it worked before Him in the Pharisaism of His day, but now as sin was actually placed upon Him, "He was sore amazed." As its yawning chasm opened before Him, as He felt the awful stench and blast upon His holy face, as He felt the quaking sands beneath His feet, as He gazed into the black abyss of the depraved heart of humanity, "He was sore amazed." He had seen angels of light transformed into demons of the night. He had seen man bearing the very image of God degraded to the level of the beast, but now as sin drew up close to Him, and His own heart assumed the curse, "He was sore amazed."

John Wesley said that the fundamental difference between natural and revealed religion was in their respective doctrines of man. Natural religion says that both good and ill reside within, that "There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of

us that it hardly behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us." So with a hearty cultivation of the good, eventually the evil will be routed. However, revealed religion says, "There is none that doeth good, no not one." . . . "All we like sheep have gone astray and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 1:19-25). Sin has not only touched the acts of man but has poisoned and palsied his very nature till he cannot do aught but miss the mark of the perfect will of God. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

Shall we be so vain and blindly presumptuous as to deny this cruel reality? Look upon the hillsides and in the vales and see the cities of the dead, the silent sentinels guarding the past. Every limping step, every shriveled arm, every smothered groan, every piercing cry is but the shrieking evidence of the awful presence of sin amongst the children of men. How truly does the Word

of God cry out, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now."

Deny sin? How blind and foolish for us to deny its awful fact! Gaze upon the bloody trail across the pages of time! Blood trickling warm in the fresh footprints of the first human pair! The blood of Abel crying from the very ground! The martyrdom of the saints! The inquisition! The French revolution! It is blood, blood, blood, all the way along. Watch its crimson tide creeping higher and higher each century accumulating an awful carnage of woe until that great Apocalypse and revelation of the Christ of God when, in the words of the Scripture, the blood shall be even to the bridles of the horses. Sin is the most cruel, the most real fact of human experience.

**Chapter Two**

***Definitions***



## CHAPTER II

### DEFINITIONS

Since Satan's primary purpose has ever been the obscuring of the fact of sin, and since human kind has ever been the tool for his exploitation, we may readily expect to find the field keenly contested for centuries past. It is even so.

Of all the questions occupying theological interest, none has been more keenly and bitterly debated than the one of sin. Since man began to give expression to his attitude thereto every variety and shade of theory has been put forth. It would be exceedingly difficult and unprofitable if not hopelessly confusing to attempt definitions of the many startling phases of this subject. Every conceivable doctrine of sin has had its inception and inspiration in the myriad of cults covering our land. They run the gauntlet from bald denial to the most absurd scientific vagaries. Much has been written both in confirmation and denial. This is not the burden of our pen.

But before we define the propositions which demand our interest we must qualify the task before us. The controversy is not over the question of forgiveness but over the disposition of the sin principle in the heart of the believer. In orthodox circles there is a unanimity of mind regarding the forgiveness of sins. All will readily testify to the conviction and illumination of the Holy Spirit who gently leads the soul to a full confession and forsaking of the sins of his life; to the witness of the Spirit in full and complete forgiveness of the past. Personal testimony wherever you hear it always rings true at this point. It is through the conviction of the Holy Spirit that one is made

aware of sin and made sorry for the life of the past. It is through the same Spirit that encouragement is given to renounce those sins. It is still through the same Spirit that faith is created in the heart of the one burdened for his sins and as a result he is at last brought to the place of full confidence of the witness of acceptance by the Father. The question before us, therefore, is not the way God deals with men's *sins* as acts but the way God deals with *sin* as a principle.

There are, however, three positions relative to the solution of the sin problem that may be esteemed at all scripturally acceptable. These three attitudes cover a rather comprehensive definition of the orthodox field of teaching. So much of damaging evidence against the other position has already been heaped upon the bookshelves of the world that our small efforts would be of little or no value. These three positions or schools of thought are indexed by a proper and well-defined terminology familiar even to the casual orthodox reader. This terminology readily deepens lines already clearly drawn in the great fundamentalist host. Each position has its courageous champions with unsheathed swords ready for the fray. These three are the only positions we can consider relative to the Bible's attitude toward sin. They are eradication, counteraction, and suppression.

Eradication is a word long since coined by that group called holiness people. Beneath its banner today can be heard the tramp of a mighty and militant host. Their battle cry is, "Death to sin and total deliverance from depravity!" Their terminology implies their doctrine. Although personal faith in the Christ of Calvary has resulted in a regenerated and transformed life, yet there still remains in that heart a sinful deposit. However, a second definite experience, in the words of Wesley, "The second blessing properly so-called" is obtained by

(1) an unreserved abandonment to all the will of God—past, present, future, known, and unknown and (2) by a definite living faith in the same Christ who formerly forgave all sins committed. It is effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit cleansing the heart of the believer from the entire remains of sin and filling the void with His own ineffable Presence so that in the days yet to come “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” In this position there is a clear differentiation between sin and sins, between cause and effect, between source and outflow. The logic of the position assumes, upon a vital acceptance and appropriation of the facts, a life of constant victory outstandingly marked by consistent and constant reactions of perfect love in all the motions of life.

There is a further insistence upon the part of the eradicationist against any possibility of growing into this experience inasmuch as it is an absurdity to assume that one condition can grow into another. The eradicationist, unlike the suppressionist, refuses to accept the necessity of physical death as essential to holiness of heart on the grounds that such would make sin resident in the flesh. He insists that sin is basically a spiritual and moral quality, and can be related to the physical only in a secondary sense.

The teachings of suppression are championed by many who are loath to yield to what they claim to be the extreme and dogmatic position of the eradicationist. The latter's conception of sin seems to the suppressionist to be extravagant and far-fetched. Sin to him is too inclusive, too indelibly written in the nature of men to secure a present release. True, sin resides in the believer even after the acts of the past have been forgiven, but to assume the possibility of the complete removal of the last remains of the despicable virus of sin seems to the

suppressionist but an idle tale. He believes that there is no possibility of its removal until Jesus comes, or until one dies. Long since, we listened to a prominent Bible teacher whose name, if mentioned, would be familiar to many. He stated the suppressionist position clearly when he said, "I have been asked if I believe in carnality. Indeed I do," was his reply, "and I expect to battle with this principle as long as I live."

However, by a consecration for service and by persistent effort he can live a life of sufficient devotion so that the Holy Spirit will gladly own and bless his ministry by the suppression of inbred sin. He lingers about Paul's hypothetical picture—"I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21).

We might add that a good many teachers and workers who belong to this group have been forced from the illogical position of teaching the possibility of a life of victory in such a setting. Thus they are now teaching that the work of regeneration and sanctification are simultaneous. Their pet phrase is, "You get it all at once." They insist that conversion includes sanctification. Since we will later discuss this question more fully, we merely state this position in a further attempt to adequately explain the attitudes of the Calvinist toward the sin question.

The more modern school of counteraction, unwilling to accept the inconsistent position of the suppressionist, and firm in their stand against what they consider to be the extreme position of the eradicationist, feel that they must find a neutral ground. Many have supported this position not only as a doctrine but also with the fond hope that they will someday reconcile that long-time breach between those of like precious faith. In a strenuous effort to find a terminology that would clearly indicate

their neutrality they seized upon the word "counteraction."

Here again the definition implies and somewhat clarifies the position. This attitude may be a bit more vague in concrete expression, but its premises are certain. This school of thought believes that a happy yielding to the sweet suasion of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus, will result in a counteraction of those evil influences lurking within the regenerated heart. They believe in having more of God than of sin. Like a pair of balances delicately suspended in the soul, a sufficient weight of blessing and divine power must surely outweigh the consequences of the inbeing of sin thus causing the believer to maintain a happy place of victory and spiritual poise. It is like the bright sunshine of the morning chasing away the gray shadows of the dawn. They say, "Let the sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings by a sweet submission to His presence and the shadows of sin will flee away." This position is usually known as the Victorious Life. It is, in brief, commonly referred to as the Keswick doctrine.

Chapter Three

*The Problem*

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEM

There can be no argument against the fact that good men have championed all of these positions. One who would deny this could be properly labeled a bigot.

We are sometimes forgetful of the unconscious influence of early training and background of teaching in the lives of people. We need but to stop and recall the fact that it is the exceptional individual who has stepped from the beaten paths of his forebears to join the ranks of strangers or to blaze a new trail of his own. We are deeply biased by those delicate impressions of youth especially in the matter of religious training. Not only so but those incipient influences of earliest Christian experience linger long and resolutely. It is certain that comparatively few ever leave the ranks of their early teaching and Christian instruction. It is, also, often a matter of apparent coincidence that many were spiritually awakened and born again under that particular flag beneath which they now march. The great majority of those converted in the holiness ranks still place their allegiance there. The majority of those brought to Christ under the influence of various Bible schools still follow in their wake. Nearly all of those led into the light of saving faith through the literature and conventions of the Victorious Life groups have remained to swell the ranks and accelerate the progress of this school of thought. Is not this ever true, socially, and politically, as well as religiously?

Without question some have, in the sincerity of their heart's devotion to the Christ whom they love, obtained

an experience far superior to that particular theological atmosphere in which they were trained. Through the mercies of God they have, as Dr. A. M. Hills suggests, obtained a better heart experience than their heads would permit them to acknowledge. And though their pens have often labored to sustain a faulty philosophy of sin, their lives have predicated a heart appreciation of purity. Thank God! He deals with men's hearts. Whenever and wherever He can find an approach to a soul He will cleanse away the stain of sin in spite of a sometimes contrary mental attitude. We do not say it is ever thus. The sad tragedy confronts us the meanwhile that over the country are scores of men who at one time were confronted with the clear light of holiness which they would not accept, and they now walk in darkness, bolstering their apostasy with bitter venom against all that approaches holiness of heart. But there has been a sufficient accumulation of evidence over the years to cause us to rejoice in the infinite discrimination of our God and feel sure that many will shine as the stars in His eternal presence yonder who never labored hand in hand with us here. May God grant us charity and patience where such are due.

Why then this waste of time and energy in controversy and debate, one asks? If good men have championed all of these causes why try to unduly influence and bias a soul in his personal findings? Rather let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind allowing him to formulate his own thinking in this particular. Why not let all find solutions happy to their own hearts and backgrounds of thinking? Why not allow to everyone, unhindered, his own theory? The fact that a few people have obtained the experience without proper theological guidance, is no argument for leaving the rank and file of believers to seek the experience without scrip-



tural signposts to guide them. For experience teaches us that while a few rare souls may have obtained the experience almost unwittingly, countless thousands have been led to seek and find the land of Beulah under the clear and direct teaching of scriptural holiness. We feel therefore it is incumbent upon us to do our best to freely give that which we have so liberally received.

There is but one reply to the queries, and one sufficient. The sin question is paramount. Sin is the underlying cause, as we have seen, of every heartache, every sigh, every blighted hope, and every blasted character. When you have effectively and scripturally solved the sin problem you have settled life's major question as far as the individual is concerned. Sin is the only thing in all the world that will keep men out of heaven, the only thing that disorders the moral and ethical life in this present world.

Let us not be deceived by the siren song of mass evangelism. God has never changed His divine method of winning men. He would still reach the individual heart with transforming grace and power, and only as the multitude of redeemed is accumulated by personal decision and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will the holy cause of redemption move onward. God has never marked any short cut to the redemption of a lost race even in these modern days, nor could He. It must ever be that individual cry of "Lord, I believe." One startling danger in our evangelism today is the substitution of method and organization for birth pangs and spiritual sacrifice to bring men and women into the kingdom and family of God. "When Zion travaileth she shall bring forth." In the words of A. Paget Wilkes, "Today is the day of substitutes. At no time more emphatically than now has there been such a fatal tendency to substitute quantity for quality—men for a man—organization for the Holy

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Spirit—education for the grace of God—money for spiritual power, and so-called salvation by character for redemption through Christ.”

Not only so but also is it a fact repeatedly observed that a proper conception of sin is essential to a happy Christian philosophy. When one has found God's solution to the sin problem invariably his attitude toward other doctrines and questions finds a ready and easy adjustment. Watch it as closely as you choose. A man with a perverted conception and doctrine of sin has invariably a grotesque misapprehension of most moral and spiritual problems.

There is one acid test that can ever be made of any religious teaching. What is its position relative to sin? When any individual, group, or sect emphasizes any doctrine of the precious Word of God in preference to the sin question, that teacher or group or sect is off center doctrinally. No matter how consistent with divine revelation it may be, or how harmonious with eternal writ, no doctrine may have the right of way over the doctrine of sin. As scriptural and blessed a fact as is bodily healing in the economy of vital faith, yet Jesus did not come primarily to heal. As inspiring and gripping as His imminent return is to those who look for Him, yet even this cannot anticipate an eternal settlement of the sin question. As precious as the sacraments are to the Christian Church, Jesus did not come primarily to give them to us for a heritage. Rather should these become an eloquent testimony that we have individually chosen to forsake sin for His sweet smile and blessing and to await His return from heaven.

Some years past the writer attended a popular and well-known Healing Tabernacle. He went sincerely questioning, desirous of receiving every blessing the heart could find. The simplicity of the service was appreciated,

but for one thing there was no satisfactory or adequate explanation. Stretched conspicuously over the spacious platform was a large banner bearing the following inscription, "The Double Cure." Beneath this was the scriptural quotation, "Who forgiveth all our iniquities and healeth all our diseases." What a bald perversion of truth! Innocently, we assume, this had been done in the zeal of the hour, but how grossly misleading and disconcerting to the heart battling with inbred sin. What could those words mean which have so long been sung by the Church, "Be of sin the double cure, save from wrath, and make me pure"? Here, I repeat, was a definite perversion of truth. Bodily healing as wonderful as it is through the shed blood of Christ had been given precedence over the cleansing of the human heart from inbred sin—that basic prerequisite for entrance into His eternal presence. Countless numbers have been swept into His eternal embrace out of the pains and agonies of physical suffering, and they are now awaiting the redemption of the body, but never one has ever entered His awful and holy presence with a tainted and unhealed soul. The sin question is the pivotal question. Anything taught or preached which obscures the cruciality of sin becomes an enemy of the cross of Christ.

Chapter Four

*The Dilemma*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DILEMMA

Once again we thank God that there is an experience obtainable here and now that can eradicate sin from the human heart so that the entirety of life can be brought into a sweet subservience to His precious will. We will then know the answer to the cry of David when he exclaimed, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." But remember, the entire philosophy and its practical outworking are contingent upon the cleansing of the heart from sin. If this crucial point of heart cleansing is ignored, denied, or disbelieved, an impossible predicament is created and a hopeless maze of difficulty ensues and there is little else to do but rest on the oars of spiritual effort hoping for the best.

It is at this point the opponents of scriptural holiness find themselves in a dilemma. They must in consistency either deny the possibility of a present life of victory or else wink at its crude and carnal indiscretions. In the words of Dr. J. B. Chapman, "But those who say that Christians are not bound to commit sin, though it is not possible to get entirely rid of the sin principle in this world, are under the necessity of explaining how one can live on a higher plane than his heart state. They must tell us how one can live a holy life and still not be holy in heart."

Who is there at all familiar with the Word of God who would deny the insistent call to actual righteousness and holiness in this present world? "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness

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and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). What life of Christian profession with less than genuine holy character can have any meaning to a critical and gainsaying world?

How this vital experience has been beclouded with false issues! In a strenuous effort to deny any present attainment of holiness the definition of sin has been obscured. They say one must certainly sin in word, thought, or deed each day of his life. Thus with an improper and inconsistent humility, the challenge of a clean heart and a holy life is branded as spiritual arrogance.

However, a candid and even casual investigation of God's definition of sin assures us that such an attitude is scripturally untenable. They fail to differentiate between mistaken judgment and deliberate intent; between lack of knowledge and an unwillingness to walk in the light; between infirmity and sin. Thus the prospects being denied and the seeking of such an experience condemned, the multitude of church people pass by unmoved by the challenge to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

We remind you that wrongdoing is vastly different from misdoing. What is a mistake? It is obviously a "miss-take." One's motive was consistent with a pure heart and in full harmony with the principle of perfect love, yet that one "miss-took." Can it be consistently held that God will hold us responsible for that which is not known or understood? Paul tells us that by the law came the knowledge of sin, that where there is no knowledge, there is no transgression. God will not unjustly condemn where there is no actual knowledge of sin. Our conduct may sometimes err even with the purest of motives prompting that act; yet God will not hold me guilty when I actually did my prayerful best. But rest assured

such action is based upon a prayerful and sincere search for all the will of God. Fletcher suggested Paul's two exhortations so inconsistent in the eyes of those who attempt to confuse infirmity with sin. "Them that sin rebuke before all" (I Tim. 5:20). "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" (Rom. 15:1). Here are two direct commands, "Rebuke sin," "Bear with infirmities." How incoherent are these scriptures if there be no discrimination between infirmities and sins. Although our faulty human judgments and infirmities may sometimes thwart a perfect act, yet God sees the heart's holy intent and His smile is upon us and we are accepted by Him. Notice God's estimate of King Asa of old, "But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days" (II Chron. 15:17).

Only one other recourse remains and that is a sinning religion. The late Dr. Scofield in his well-known Reference Bible speaks of "the sinning saint." What an impossible paradox. One might as well speak of good-evil or light-darkness. The one is unmistakably the opposite, the antagonist of the other. How strained and impossible is such a position as this! It would seem apparent even to the scripturally untutored that the gospel of Jesus Christ either saves, or it does not save. If this be true, what is the difference between the man of the street and the man of the church save in their mental attitudes? In the light of such a position how unreal and impracticable are those glorious promises, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "His name shall be called Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him seeing he ever liveth to make intercession."

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To attempt to isolate or limit the meaning of such scriptures to a coming dispensation is but begging the question. "As many were made sinners so shall many be made righteous." To relegate to the future the standards and teachings of the Sermon on the Mount is a travesty on biblical interpretation. The human heart that is honestly looking for deliverance from the power and dominion of sin does not find a satisfactory response to his own soul's cry and need in such elusive promises as these. In the face of such a far distant deliverance in another dispensation he must needs cry out with Paul of old, "Woe is me."

Hence the dilemma. If the possibility of heart cleansing be denied, the anticipation of present victory is hopeless and meaningless. If the source of human pollution cannot be cleansed now, how can the overt acts of men become consistent with the life of Christ, for, "As he is so are we in this world" (I John 4:17). If the promise cannot fail we are to be "delivered out of the hands of our enemies (that we) might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). If the main spring of man's spiritual nature cannot here and now be attuned to divine will and nature throughout, how impossible is an actual life of victory consistent with the glorious gospel proclamation of salvation from sin. How impracticable are then the controlling of man's appetites, affections, and propensities? If the scriptural consistency of a holy life is not sustained, what can we do? We are truly of all people most miserable, and the instinctive hope of the soul is stifled with a mocking pretense.



Chapter Five

*Eradication*

## CHAPTER V

### ERADICATION

No phase of the sin problem has been more bitterly and strenuously opposed than the affirmation that the last remains of sin can be removed from the heart of man here and now. Sweeping liberality is often granted in fundamental interpretation save in this one particular. The writer's personal experience vouchsafes the truthfulness of this statement. Among that great and gracious people where he first labored in his ministerial career, theological laxity was but feebly challenged. However, let one proclaim the possibility of death to sin in this present age, and henceforth he must bear the anathema of gross heresy and the accusation of wild mental vagaries. Good men in their mistaken and sometimes carnal zeal have deliberately stepped aside from their God-given prerogatives, and forgetful of pulpit and platform ethics, have sorely and rigorously libeled those who would dare support such a position. Good men have with pen and by word of mouth instructed souls in those identical steps of consecration and faith inevitably leading an honest heart to a certain knowledge of inward purity only to bitterly close in with the supporters of this very doctrine as to its logical and scriptural results. Even men whose mental acumen and scholarship could not be questioned have indignantly declared that such a proposition as a clean heart here and now has absolutely no scriptural support—and this in face of the clear teaching of the Word of Life.

There is an eradication of sin from the heart of the believer. This is most evidently and clearly proved with-

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out a single misapplication of text or any untoward effort. We have space for but a few scriptural passages whose contexts speak with unmistakable import. Neither would it be difficult to bring forth from the treasury of the Lord much more evidence to bear further weight of proof. How amazing is the deceitfulness of the carnal heart! How astonishing is the blindness of those minds closed to truth antagonistic to their prejudices!

Mark with careful scrutiny the words of the apostle in his Roman letter (6:6), "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Many have affirmed that Paul never taught the eradication of sin, that no single passage can be cited as evidence of his clear support of this so-called extreme doctrine. Yet here is one if there were no others. Can we conceive of a man with the ethics and standards of the Apostle Paul speaking so personally and unhesitatingly of a teaching in which he himself had neither lot nor part? Would this not be the worst kind of perjury of the soul? I affirm in the light of this scripture as well as other passages that Paul was a believer in and a possessor of heart purity.

Here is a figure, chosen by the apostle, which can have but one satisfactory implication—death. Crucifixion in the light of contemporaneous Roman custom could mean but one thing—death. There upon the cross of shame, in the literal expression of the writer, our old man of sin is to be crucified in company with Christ. By divine forethought the crucifixion of the sin principle is inextricably associated with the awful yet glorious Cross. Truly did He suffer without the gate that we should be literally made holy in heart here and now. Most surely was Jesus manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

Of course, there are some who would attempt to challenge the consistency of such a premise by contending that Paul positively affirmed that he was not already made perfect, but such an attempted rebuttal is not only void but indicative of very superficial interpretation. One needs but to read the context of the third chapter of Philippians most casually to grasp the meaning of the apostle. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after . . . ," we hear him say. But pray tell of what he is speaking—heart perfection? Obviously not, for he has just declared that his heart's great longing is "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; *if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead;*" but three verses later we hear him cry, "let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." We cannot now discuss some improper implications of perfection for that must needs arise in a later discussion. But, thank God, Jesus' transcendent command of the Sermon on the Mount can be realized here and now, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Glorious news! Perfection of love is within humanity's grasp. Through Christ's precious sacrifice that old stony heart can be removed and in its place be created a heart of flesh like unto His own, a heart of divine, melting love. Thank God, to the earnest, unbiased soul the crucifixion of our Lord has more momentous consequences than imputed righteousness reserved for some future kingdom age. Rather now in this present dispensation the human soul can enjoy its Utopia of divine love by the re-

nunciation of self and the crucifixion of the old man of sin that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth, here and now, we should not serve sin. For as many were MADE sinners so shall many be MADE righteous.

Turn again to those unmistakably dogmatic and stirring words of the Colossian letter (2:11), "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Where are the remotest grounds of interpretation to infer aught else than destruction of sin? The rite of circumcision had and still has but one implication—separation and mortification. In fact, the literal double negative of the original text but emphasizes the truth already startling and vivid, "In whom ye are circumcised . . . in the putting AWAY and OFF the body of the sins of the flesh." There is no more forceful illustration in the entire New Testament as to God's predetermined disposition of sin.

Mark briefly the clear teaching of the text, "In whom ye also are circumcised . . . by a circumcision made WITHOUT HANDS (a supernatural act) in the putting off (a distinct removal) the body of the sins of the flesh (the very source and taproot from which the overt acts of sin originated) by the crucifixion of Christ (the very purpose for which He came)."

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND WITH FIRE" (Matt. 3:10-11). In this hour of fullness of revelation, God insists that the axe be laid to the root of the tree, that the source of the trouble

be reached, that the provocation of evil be removed. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, HE PURGETH IT, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). "He *purgeth it*"—purge, a word from which our English word cathartic is derived meaning to cleanse, to expurgate, to eliminate dross, to remove impurity. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH US (the same verb as in John 15:2) FROM ALL SIN. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" (I John 1:7-9). True, as many were MADE sinners so shall many be MADE righteous (Rom. 5:19). How clearly did Zacharias, under the mighty impetus and revealing power of the Holy Ghost, anticipate the glorious coming of the golden dispensation of grace. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; . . . that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:68, 69, 74). Thank God "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation unto all men teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us FROM ALL INIQUITY, and PURIFY unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14, 15). "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not*

perish, but have *everlasting life*—"Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might *sanctify and cleanse it*" (John 3:16; Ephesians 5:25, 26). In other words, God gave His own Son to save the world from their sins while Christ gave himself that He might cleanse and purify the church.

Can one wonder, in the light of these and kindred scriptures, that early in the modern propagation of holiness teaching the word "eradication" should have been adopted? True the word is not to be found in the entire text of Scripture, but the reader is challenged to find either word or phrase that so forcibly, concisely, and accurately portrays the persistent statements of the Bible as to God's disposition of sin in the heart of man.

With infinite forethought God chose the Greek language to be the vehicle of divine revelation in the unfolding of an age of grace. No language, past or present, holds such versatility and lucidity of expression. Our own English language is confessedly a beggar in its presence. Such delicacy of expression and careful turning of thought is not within the capability of any other tongue. There were ample words within the vocabulary of both classical and spoken Greek which could mean to control, bring into subserviency, to keep under, to hold down. The significant fact is, however, that in no single instance does the Bible refer to God's method of dealing with sin in the human heart in such terminology. Ever does the Scripture declare that sin is to be cleansed—removed—ex-purgated. And in spite of all this, mistaken men tell us that the Bible nowhere teaches the destruction of sin. Thank God for the glorious gospel declaration of the present possibility of an utter deliverance from that awful body of death. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through

Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24, 25). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by WHOM also we have access into THIS GRACE wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2).



Chapter Six

*Scriptural Suppression*

## CHAPTER VI

### SCRIPTURAL SUPPRESSION

We now approach a phase of truth which we believe very vital to a proper conception of the glorious economy of holiness. It is a phase, we grant, too often ignored and overlooked by many advocates of heart purity.

There is associated with this marvelous work of heart cleansing a suppression, not of sin, but of the propensities, affections, and appetites of the sanctified. In the words of Dr. A. M. Hills, "Man is a complex being, a little world in himself, an animal and an angel dwelling together. Body and soul, reason and passion, conscience and desire, are often opposing and conflicting forces, and man is left

'In doubt to act or rest,  
In doubt to deem himself a God or beast  
In doubt his soul or body to prefer.'

Such a being needs guidance and restraint. The fiery steeds of passion must be put under bit and bridle, and be made to obey the dictates of right reason instead of breaking away under the spur of desire. There is no natural and essential principle of our nature that needs to be, or can be eradicated, but there are many that need to be subordinated and restrained. The *abnormal and the depraved* in them need to be removed by *sanctifying grace*. The Bible perfectly reveals this the only way of harmonizing reason and conscience with the conflicting emotions and turbulent passions, bringing them all into submission to the perfect will of God. It does not teach us to abuse and to waste the body by torturing asceticism,

nor does it surrender us to the supremacy of wasting passions. It forbids everything that is malevolent and selfish and harmful; it permits whatever is benevolent and calculated to enhance the good of man and the glory of God. It excludes one from no enjoyment that is compatible with the highest good. It demands no self-denial, but that willing sacrifice of perfect love." Holiness does not by any means dehumanize a person. It removes the carnal element but not the human element. We are still intensely human, in fact more normally human than hitherto.

Many advocates of heart purity have, unintentionally, assumed an attitude of silence toward the problems of vital living following the glorious experience of heart cleansing, thus leaving many important and delicate problems of holy living obscured and unanswered. This silence has but contributed confusion and oftentimes a superficial ethics of holiness. We would by no means imply that this has been a deliberate evasion, but rather an assumption that the sanctified life would automatically care for itself. This very neglectful attitude has inferred to many either no necessity for the consideration of Christian ethics or an impossible state of perfection. There is a definite relationship between the experience of a clean heart and the moral conduct of the possessor.

It is high time, therefore, that holiness preachers teach more constantly, line upon line, precept upon precept, that consistency of conduct which is compatible with a profession of perfect love. Not only is this the case, but clear and patient instruction at this point would remove barriers of prejudice preventing honest souls from obtaining a precious experience now unknown to them. This rather inconsistent silence on the ethics of holiness has granted to its opponents grounds of complaint and argument that have materially impeded the progress and

defense of this vital truth. We would in no wise infer that we can ever hope for a reconciliation of antagonistic teaching. Such would be a wild dream. Yet there are, we feel certain, thousands of stable-thinking people who would be won wholeheartedly to the espousal of our cause did they but fully understand our position.

We repeat—holiness does not dehumanize the individual. God endowed man with an emotional nature as a complement to both intelligence and will. This emotional nature still exists in the life of the sanctified even though marred and distorted by the shock of sin. Propensities, appetites and affections must be recognized in the life of the sanctified. They must be controlled and cultured into harmonious consistence with true holiness. There are those God-given propensities placed in the human personality by infinite design: the social instinct, curiosity, self-preservation and kindred qualities.

God purposely endowed man with that quality we term social instinct. Man was made like God in his longing for fellowship. There is a reason for man's natural affinity with his fellows. He is a gregarious creature by divine endowment, a reflection of the very nature of his Creator. For after the Infinite hand had peopled the heavens with innumerable hosts; had populated both land and sea with living creatures, still God's heart yearned for fellowship. So He formed man out of the dust of the ground but in His own image He made him, the answer to the cry for fellowship in the heart of God. No wonder, we repeat, is it a surprising thing to find this propensity in man wherever he dwells. The complexities of modern life, then, are not merely a superficial reaction without an apparent cause. Man innately cleaves to his fellows, and although the cost of such relationship is high, he shuts his eyes to the price he must

pay and jostles the multitudes in the hot and stifling cities of the world.

Right here, then, is a place for suppression. This native tendency must be held in check when its outworking hinders a close walk with God. One must learn when to leave the busy multitude and frequent the chamber of meditation and prayer. Right here is one of the keen tests of Christian life. Those who have seen this danger and have suppressed their natural yearning for their fellows for the sake of communion with their Maker, have learned the secret of power. That man who persistently and habitually withdraws from the warm touch of people for the sake of daily communion with his Saviour, has ever been the man who has led the line of the spiritual hosts of his generation. And the converse is just as true. That Christian, regardless of state of grace, who does not learn that vital secret of the proper suppression of his social desires for the place of prayer will soon lose that glow and warmth of heart found only in the secret presence of his Lord. This social instinct however sanctified will ever tug against the call to prayer.

Then again there is that propensity we call curiosity. Treat as lightly as you choose the curiosity of the human mind, yet you cannot check that burning thirst for knowledge. God put it there in the human breast assuming that man would use it to exploit the good and holy and become acquainted with the Infinite. Sad was that fall that prostituted this noble zeal for truth. Yet, withal, there it remains throbbing in the human breast even after the heart has been purified from sin. [No parent has the right to stifle that untiring "why" of the child. God placed it there that it might grow and expand in the knowledge of life and things. And thus it goes. All that has been accomplished in the onward march of science and invention finds its source in this God-given

propensity, but that one who professes holiness of heart must vindicate his profession by suppressing this inclination to proper channels.] He who claims relationship with the Trinity of heaven must learn the art of suppressing his curiosity from unethical and indelicate intrusions into the lives of his fellows. Some who have boasted highly in profession of grace have totally lacked this phase of ethical discrimination. In plain words then, this legitimate propensity must be controlled so that one will keep his nose out of the other fellow's business.

Again, is it wrong to protect oneself and guard one's family? We trust not. God framed the human disposition thus. Am I proving untrue to my God and Christ when I seek to throw about myself and my family protections consistent with the time in which I live? No! But when the test comes between the comforts, congeniality, and seclusion of me and mine, and His precious will I must ever put the consideration of self behind me and give God first place in all things. In other words, I must practice the suppression of self-preservation.

Are those dominant and throbbing passions of human experience which we term love and hate consistent with a sanctified life? Can one love and hate in this world and find an ethical consistency with divine personality and the dictates of perfect love? He can. I can, and will love those of my own flesh. Yet when their warm comradeship would hinder the glory of Christ I will lay firm hold upon these delicate cords of life and bring them into subjection to His will. I will practice suppression.

God never intended that holiness of heart and life would remove positiveness and strength of character, rather are we convinced that true holiness will accentuate and beautify these qualities. Can I love God and still hate? Not when that hatred finds its goal in another per-

sonality, but I can and will by a proper suppression through a purified heart, feel strongly against sin and wrong. I will learn clearly how to differentiate between principle and people. Yea, through divine grace I can learn to hate sin with a holy hatred and still love my fellow man to the place where love never fails.

Paul said, "I die daily." How grossly misconstrued has this scripture been. A most superficial reading of the context shows that the apostle spoke of bodily relations. "Yes," Paul said, "I keep my body under lest while I preach to others I myself should become a castaway." Shall we speak frankly? Thousands of holiness people the country over have jeopardized the precious cause of holiness, have sometimes caricatured this wondrous truth by a careless failure to heed the admonition of Paul. They have seemingly ignored the legitimate and consistent suppression of God-given appetites and passions, or else they have swung to an extreme and fanatical position that has brought added repugnance and distaste to the most glorious truth of the gospel. Self-gratification has too often been the curse of many in the cooling of spiritual ardor. The shekinah glory of His own presence has often been grieved away because His people failed to reckon with an inner consistency of holy living and have ignored the fundamental principle of suppression.

Oh, my friend, consistency of conduct within and without will verify the actual power of God to deliver from the thralldom of sin in this present world. Appetites in the human constitution are not removed after sanctification, but they must be controlled in consistency with a pure heart. We must reckon with these human propensities, appetites, and affections. In the words of Paul, "We must reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Thank God! through the wonderful experience

of heart cleansing I can learn the practical possibilities of controlling these God-given propensities though they still may bear the scars of sin so that I am able to say with Paul, "Whether I eat or drink or whatsoever I do, I will do all to the glory of God." Praise God! with a proper spiritual perspective and a wholesome philosophy I can learn how to bring these sanctified propensities, though ravished by the fall, into a joyous harmony with a consistent godly walk.



Chapter Seven

*Scriptural Counteraction*

## CHAPTER VII

### SCRIPTURAL COUNTERACTION

Thank God for those triumphant and hope-filled words of Isaiah 59:19, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." We could not for a moment believe that the psalmist is thinking only of those grosser temptations of the enemy. Again and again through our life here below the tidal waves of the enemy will seek to engulf the soul. Here is the secret and truth of counteraction. The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against the enemy, for with the precious Paraclete of heaven dominating and ruling our spirits He will successfully counteract those certain and repeated attacks. He will adequately and wonderfully undergird us for the trials and burdens of life.

As the rising sun of the fresh morning dissolves the mists and paints its majestic hues on a virgin sky, so the blessed Comforter will arise with healing in His wings driving back the shadows and sighs of human care that would often crush and blind, and filling the soul with His cleansing glow. This is the life of holy counteraction.

Sorrow oftentimes invested with a seeming authority from the enemy appalls us, but straightway the Holy Spirit rebukes this untoward intrusion, filling the wounded and frightened spirit with a buoyancy and calm known only to those who have walked through the valley of the shadow and have learned this wonderful fact.

Many times the legitimate burdens of life darkened by the witchery of the enemy bear heavily in upon our souls. There seems to be no relief from the terrific pres-

sure. Suddenly taking advantage of innate human weakness the enemy presses almost to the point of despair. As the Apostle Paul describes it from his own experience—"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (II Cor. 1:8). Then it is that into the soul there surges a tide of joy, and peace, and welling faith, and once again the enemy retreats, a chagrined and defeated foe.

Sometimes we face the rugged mountain of some mighty problem. The peak is clouded in the mists of uncertainty. There is no path to the right or left. Its bleak and dreary sides promise nothing but black and adamant hopelessness. Then it is the Holy Ghost leads one away to the secret place of prayer, and there on pinions of faith the soul is lifted high above the mist-bathed peak. Yonder in the luminous sunlight of His ineffable glory the problem flattens out against the landscape of human affairs as through the eyes of the Spirit one gains a holy perspective of that which is now beneath his feet. Once again he comes forth with a divinely wrought purpose and indomitable power to bore through the seemingly impossible and impassable mountain of difficulty. Again the Holy Ghost has counteracted the cares of life through the secret of His indwelling presence.

Problems, cares, and perplexities crowding into every avenue of human life threaten to unseat and overwhelm. But when the Holy Ghost fills the soul of the child of God He will with a divine versatility counteract each succeeding attack of the enemy. It is true the enemy is untiring in his efforts and will invent new ways and combinations of circumstances to discomfit the child of God, "but greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." Recently we sat at the table in a Christian home. The ques-

tion of trials arose. One remarked that he thought the enemy had run the gauntlet of artful endeavor only to find new and ingenious ways in trials and burdens. But any doubts on our part as to the conquering and counteracting power of the Holy Ghost were readily dismissed as we gazed into that sweet yet strong countenance bearing the marks of holy fortitude and Christlike character.

Thus through the years of life's pressures the Holy Ghost will, if given full place and power in the heart of man, counteract these inevitable burdens common to human experience. With a heart set upon the end of it all, conscious that each added conflict and triumph is but building a greater capacity for eternal enjoyment, faith cannot help but conquer. Thus when He has tried us He will bring us forth from the crucibles of human vicissitudes as pure gold.

Chapter Eight

*Growth in Grace*

## CHAPTER VIII

### GROWTH IN GRACE

Many opponents of scriptural holiness have unjustly and unfairly made the accusation that such a position denies the possibility of growth in grace. This is not so. In fact, no other possible scriptural premise admits so consistently the teaching of a growth in grace. The one who denies the possibility of the removal of sin from the heart in this present life is confronted with an extremely hazardous chance of consistent spiritual development. His time will be largely absorbed with internal struggles and with oft-repeated confessions of failure and repentance. Hannah Whitall Smith, author of that Christian classic, *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, records the incident of a woman who interrupted her sermon one evening as she was discoursing on this very theme. The woman ejaculated that she had been taught to believe that she must grow into holiness. The speaker replied with the question as to how long she had been saved. Upon the reply to this query she again asked her how much nearer she was to the experience now than when first saved. The woman, honestly chagrined, dropped her head only to reply that she doubted if she were as spiritual as she had been in days past. This pathetic case but emphasizes the unchallenged fact that no one ever yet produced one single case of a soul having reached a state of holiness by growth.

On the other hand, he who accepts that position clearly consistent with revelation is in a happy attitude and frame of mind actually to grow in grace. With his nature renewed and the inward foe to spiritual progress

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and aptitude removed by a second work of grace, there stretches out before his anticipating vision vistas of growth and possibilities of grace hitherto unknown. Those very things "that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," the Holy Spirit will reveal to that one determined to know the experience of a clean heart.

G. Campbell Morgan said that Christian experience is made up of processes and crises. How well put. It is possible that the Doctor meant differently from the way we choose to interpret his words. Nevertheless his statement is true to form. Many when challenged with the second blessing properly so-called, contend that they believe in many blessings. Such is a fact no doubt, yet the actual truth in this particular is far more specific and definite. There are two epochal crises in every genuine Christian experience of any reasonably long standing. All that precedes these two clearly defined experiences and all that eventually follows them may be consistently termed process experiences.

Somewhere, sometime, God began a process of instruction and providence in the life of the one who now knows the Lord. That process may have been short or stretched over the years. Gently and lovingly God in His sovereign will was bringing that individual to an attitude of mind and heart where he would be most susceptible to the wooings of the Holy Spirit. How matchless is His love! With what divine forethought He anticipated my salvation! Long before a single longing stirred within my breast, God was directing the circumstances of my life to that happy end. Regardless of the time element involved there came an instant when, like a flash, divine power and love broke into my spirit with new life from above. "Old things passed away, and all things became new" as if by magic. Another soul had been born into

the kingdom of God with his heart crying by divinely planted instinct, "Abba Father!"

Then followed another process of training and instruction. As before, this period was contingent upon background, training, and native responsiveness to spiritual things. With some it was but a brief period while with others it stretched on through the weary years like the dreary wanderings of Israel of old. We recall that precious white-haired Presbyterian who once bowed at the altar in a camp meeting in Nova Scotia. He arose to his feet, his face bathed in heavenly light and glory, and testified that he had always been taught that he could not be sanctified wholly until the hour and article of death, but now thank God, he actually possessed the experience. The crisis had taken place in a moment of time.

The inevitability of the second crisis is most apparent from God's dealing with many, many souls. Men who had never heard or known of the theology or philosophy of holiness, prompted by a hunger of heart prayed their way through into a precious experience. Later, proper instruction and intelligence came and they were made aware for the first time of the fact of the need of a clean heart. The God of all grace had led them thus to the utter satisfying of their souls without the slightest intellectual knowledge of theology. Enough specific and authentic cases could easily be recounted to prove beyond all doubt the reality of this glorious work of grace.

This second crisis faced and the victory won, there stretches out before the soul the prospect of the fullness of the stature of the manhood of Christ.

We must ever remember that the grace of God does for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. Had there been a way for man to have saved himself Christ would never have come to this world of woe. But "there was no



arm to save nor eye to pity," therefore His arm brought salvation to mankind. How wonderful the description by Paul in Ephesians the second chapter! What a black picture in the first verses. Then we come upon those marvelous words, "But God." How wonderfully grace enters upon the scene and conquers for the helpless and lifts the utterly fallen. Even then how helpless the soul with that inward proneness to sin! Truly the carnal mind is enmity—not at enmity, but rather the very personification of enmity and rebellion. It is not subject to the law of God or ever can be made to be. Again the grace of God meets the crucial need. "For I am crucified with Christ: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God!" But now God, by His grace, having delivered us from the present power and dominion of sin throws us upon our own resources plus divine aid. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God in order that we may happily finish our course with joy. We are to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. We are to constantly walk in the light through the power of an indwelling Comforter that the blood of Jesus Christ may continue to cleanse and keep. The school of probation now fully entered, we must train for the heavenly kingdom. The trial of our faith which is much more precious than gold will bring in the end an exceeding gracious reward. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance;

and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:3-8, 10, 11). True, there hath no temptation taken us but such is common to man, and God in infinite love will never allow us to be pressed beyond endurance. So we will rejoice in manifold temptations and thus, apprehended by grace and adjusted to the divine character and purpose of God by a definite cleansing of the heart, we will open wide the door to the riches of His grace so that we beholding the face of Jesus Christ, may go from grace to grace and from glory to glory. And one of these days after a triumphant life of holy victory has come to a close we can say in the words of Solomon, "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise" (I Kings 8:56).

Chapter Nine

*Applied Holiness*

## CHAPTER IX

### APPLIED HOLINESS

The proper solution of the sin problem involves more than readiness for heaven. It must be agreed that such preparation is the ultimate objective of salvation and we heartily agree with Curtis in his *The Christian Faith* that God is building a new race of men. But to attain that end man must learn how to live out the application of holiness in this present life for this life is our school of training and probation. And true it is that the solution of the sin problem fits one for maximum living here and also prepares him for eternal relationships—"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). Holiness is normalcy. Holiness works in actual experience. How strange this sounds on untutored ears. So many are under the misapprehension that holiness is restrictive, constrictive. The very opposite is the fact. Holiness is expansive and liberating in its effects upon the entire being of man. A new world opens before him. The experience of holiness elevates the workaday life to the highest planes of capacity and expression. It is, in other words, a workable experience in a workaday world. This, therefore, is the motive of this chapter: to help you in some measure to realize and appreciate the wonderful reality of the life of holiness—the essence of real living.

Our powers of body, mind, and spirit willingly consecrated to God in the crisis of entire sanctification, are now handed back to be held in trust by us as faithful stewards.

The physical powers, once the instruments of unrighteousness, are now dedicated unto righteousness and to the glory of God. Our legitimate appetites and desires, once so clamorous in their demands for self-expression, are now under the control of a sanctified will. And being thus regulated they contribute to our general well-being. The power to enjoy life is not quickly vitiated by overindulgence in even legitimate realms, rather a moderation in all things becomes the daily mode of living. Do we seek recreation? It is that we may better fit our minds and bodies for His service. Questionable or unwholesome recreations are never considered. There are plenty of legitimate activities, consistent with a holy life, in which we may engage with delight and enthusiasm that bring invigoration to both mind and body.

Our carnal pride gone, we possess a wholesome self-respect and a God-given desire to adorn the gospel which keeps us from being careless in personal appearance and modifies the natural instinct to merely appear physically attractive. Interest henceforth is centered in inward beauty and strength of character rather than in an abnormal regard for outward beauty and show.

The mental powers, too, come within the ennobling influence of holiness. Mind so closely related to spirit cannot help but feel the effects of purity. The mind, cleansed from the poison of fitful, angry passions, rules the body with a majesty hitherto unknown. Free from unwholesome dissipations, the mental faculties are kept alert, clear, responsive to all the demands made upon them. The best way to substantiate the benefit of holiness in the mental sphere is simply to call attention to the results of Christian education in a holiness college. The common observation of one who has been privileged to "look on" for a long time shows beyond question that the young people who have gone from such institutions

to universities and graduate schools have ranked high and many times have excelled in scholarship. The positive benefits of a clean mind held in sway by the spirit of true holiness is confirmed beyond all argument in the keen responsiveness of the mental faculties resultant from a spiritual nature redeemed and purified. In this hour of spiritual and moral uncertainty what a challenge confronts the redeemed and purified faculties of youth. Moral standards are nearly obliterated. The spiritual atmosphere has become stagnant with unbelief. Into such a world sanctified youth can go heroically, to rebuild the basic standards of social security, and to blaze a trail out of the darkness of modern paganism into the light and liberty of the gospel of Christ.

Man's spirit is the highest and crowning element of his nature. With his spirit quickened by regeneration and purified by entire sanctification a man will realize that the fullness of grace vitally elevates and energizes the renewed capacities of his inner being. He will soon become aware of unleashed powers he little dreamed existed. He will find the problems of adjustment in the various relationships of life greatly simplified by a motivation of love beyond all he has hitherto experienced.

We should ever remember that a man reveals his true strength of character only when he is under stress. The application of holiness to daily living gets right at the source of character for it capacitates one for the stress and strain of things and grants him moral reserve for those inevitable tests of life. Holiness gives one the power of adequate self-mastery in any situation. We are reminded of the proverb from the Book of books that he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. With sin eradicated from the heart a man does not react with anger and impatience to a clash of wills but rather radiates that divine love which never faileth.

Oh, how satisfactorily holiness fits life in all its phases. It vindicates its adequacy whether it be in trials, adversities, or in the joys of life, providing a wholesomeness and sanity that will stand out in marked contrast to the heated rush and fever manifested by those around us. It grants a poise which is equal to any test. Poise means to weigh out, to balance, to maintain an equilibrium. And this is exactly what holiness of heart does in the personal life. It maintains a balance and equilibrium that baffles and defeats the opposition of the enemy of the soul. It grants peace, patience, and perspective. As G. H. Morrison says, "Peace is the possession of adequate resources." There is an inner sense of adequacy through the dominion of the Holy Spirit. And conscious of this fact, one no longer feels that he is fighting his battles alone, for he knows that "When the enemy would come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." Thus one calmly holds his soul in readiness for whatever may be his lot. Because of this poise of spirit one may be patient when plans do not carry through, when motives are questioned, when disappointments come. And one possesses that happy perspective which enables him to see things in their true light and to weigh values with proper balances. He will also be enabled to follow the admonition of Paul to "know no man after the flesh" and to measure men by spiritual standards rather than by the estimates of this age. Such an inner application of holiness will color both the trials and joys of life. Trials will be shot through with a sturdy faith and a confidence because one realizes that trials bring an opportunity for the cultivation of patience which in the end will result in an exceeding great reward. The joys of life, instead of producing a reckless and careless spirit, will beget a deeper appreciation of God for His

constant benefactions, and bring to the heart life a loyalty and constancy to Christ.

With the life actuated by such a spirit, how could home relationships be aught but happy and delightful. Thank God for an experience of holiness that will help solve the problems of the home. In spite of our humanity, and the conflict of personalities in those close and intimate ties, perfect love will provide a buffer of patience and consideration for one another. And we are constrained to add that if holiness does not find a workable application in the home what hope is there for its efficiency in the other relationships of life? No part of life is more influential than the home and it is here that holiness must prove its adequacy and power if the world is to be convinced. But it does work, for it instinctively causes the husband to esteem his companion as the weaker vessel, and she in turn grants to him a sweet and holy deference in leadership. Children will not be needlessly provoked to anger but rather will be reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And out of these divinely ordained relationships will radiate a holy atmosphere. Long after children have grown to manhood and womanhood they will look back with quickening hearts to the influences begotten there.

To carry holy living across the sacred threshold and privacy of the home into a busy, greed-driven world is another matter. To be compelled to constantly face the bemeaning influences of a world blinded to all good but gold, is an acid test indeed. But thanks be unto God, holiness works here as well as in the home. It settles once and for all carnal aspirations and unholy ambitions. Predominant in the life of the sanctified is the constant sense and delight of the responsibility of stewardship to his Lord. All the duties and tasks of life will be carried forward with God's glory in view. If position or promotion be the problem, it will be unhesitatingly judged for



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acceptance or rejection in the secret place of prayer. One will not sell his soul for mere promotion or self-aggrandizement. If bidden to sully his soul or sear his conscience he will reject such solicitation with holy scorn. He will render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Life, in short, holds for such a man the clean challenge of a livelihood sufficient for his needs and a constant ambition to better himself in every legitimate manner in order that he may be a more profitable servant of God. And thus he will leave behind him in office, store, and shop an influence which will enrich heaven and ennoble humanity.

Heartfelt religion is dogmatic. Superficial is that modern trend which asks one to deliberately lay aside the convictions of his heart under a plausible cloak of belief in the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Such an attitude strikes at the very heart of true godliness. Yet in full frankness we must admit that there are attendant liabilities at this very point. Unless religion is checked and mellowed by perfect love, there is always a tendency for one to be narrow in his interpretation and grasp of things divine. One's personal opinions may sometimes be mistaken for convictions born of the Holy Spirit, and if it were not for the correcting and directing influence of the heart under full control of God's Spirit, they would lead to a pugnacious opposition of others who disagree. And here again holiness finds a ready fitness to the field of human relations. What more can we say than to remind one that, "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never fails" (I Cor. 13:4-8).

Chapter Ten

*Necessary Cautions*

## CHAPTER X

### NECESSARY CAUTIONS

Needless to say we have been considering some of the most vital problems relative to human existence. Moreover these problems are not only vital but related to the deepest movings of the human spirit. Definitions are difficult and explanations frequently misleading. Human language at its best is inadequate as it faces the riches of God's grace. We have referred previously to God's choice of the Greek vernacular as the common language of the times when Jesus lived and taught. The Greek, usually conceded to be the best that human ingenuity has produced, falls far short in its interpretation of divine revelation. Even Paul the apostle was sometimes compelled to coin a word to express the spiritual revelation given him.

Not only are languages limited in their power to interpret the messages God has intended for man, but human figures and analogies fall short of the high horizons of truth revelation has for man. Added to these human limitations there is the inevitable inability to make our minds fully clear to each other even at the best. How easy to misunderstand what another intended to say. Therefore we must be cautious and refuse to take too much for granted when discussing problems and relationships which may seem to be debatable. In no field should we use more discretion and greater caution than in the field which we have been discussing in these preceding pages. A definition of the word sin is an example. To some, sin means a willful known violation of the will of God. To others it means any failure to obey

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the full will of God, known or unknown. How difficult it is then to express oneself clearly.

It is extremely difficult, if not humanly impossible, to define carnality with satisfying accuracy. For here we are dealing with the most subtle and mysterious part of man's moral makeup. Indeed it would be presumptuous even to attempt to speak with sufficient clarity that all might understand our meaning concerning this matter which for centuries has been the controversial field of theological investigation. But we do believe that there are some simple cautions we may cite that will help the reader to understand the viewpoint of the writer.

Speaking of carnality, or the sin natural to the human heart, brings us to a delicate but fundamentally important point. I say it reverently, even God himself, because of the limitations of human speech and thought, was handicapped in telling man all the truth. The word of God refers to the sin of man's heart as "the body of sin" (Rom. 6:6); "the body of this death" (Rom. 8:24). Such figures fall short of a literal understanding of what sin actually is. These, after all, are but symbols descriptive of a moral condition. Sin is not a SOMETHING. It is not an actual SUBSTANCE. Sin is a moral quality. Too often even those who have personally experienced heart purity have been puzzled as to what the sin of the heart actually is. Sin is a virus in the bloodstream of the moral nature; it is a virulence, a malignancy moving within the moral nature of man. But we must again caution ourselves to remember the fact that it is not an actual substance.

The reason we raise this question of the nature of sin is that too many have either rejected the possibility of purity or found themselves seriously perplexed as to how sin can be removed from the heart, and when once removed ever return once more to pollute the heart which

has been cleansed. Most of the difficulties at this point readily resolve themselves when we realize that sin is NOT a substance. God CAN by supernatural power remove the malignancy of sin just as He can remove the guilt of sins committed. And likewise, through failure to obey and by careless exposure of oneself to sin, sin can again enter the human heart just as disease can infect the human body.

There is one other caution we wish to emphasize. It revolves around the closely drawn lines of conduct. It must be admitted frankly that the line between mere human conduct and carnal action is very finely drawn. This is by no means begging the question. On the basis of the most discriminating scriptural definition of sin what may constitute sin to one is not necessarily sin to another. This discrimination is affected by motive, and motive is affected by training and moral perception. Natural mannerisms are repugnant in some people but they may be nonetheless without moral meaning. Temperamental peculiarities, heredity, human crudities, all these distort the picture and often confuse us. But we still insist that on the basis of observation and scripture one may have a clean heart even though his conduct may sometime bring criticism. Merely to brush aside the entire question with the hasty remark that no one has ever known one who has lived a life free from sin is extremely superficial.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come. . . ." (I Cor 4:5). Why did Paul say this? In part at least for the very reason we have suggested. The motives of men's hearts are of basic importance in God's sight. A pure heart with the clearest of motives has sometimes resulted in conduct that is clumsy and confusing. Therefore, do not judge now. Paul elaborates upon this important subject at length in the fourteenth

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chapter of Romans. He pleads with us not to judge our brother, but rather to be sure that we ourselves do not put stumbling blocks in the paths of others. And Peter assures us that genuine charity and love will hide many things in the lives of others that seem perilously close to the line of ethical propriety. (I Pet. 4:8.)

And thus we submit these cautions to both the doubtful and believing heart. Remember, sin is not an actual substance which can be removed as with a surgeon's knife, nor is it a quality easy to define. Likewise in view of human infirmities, charity and confidence must not give way to skepticism and doubt. As one old writer puts it: Paul admonished to rebuke sin but bear with infirmities. And in spite of the frequent inability of the human mind fully to understand and discriminate, the wonderful fact remains—God can cleanse the heart of man in this present life. Since this is so let us give the benefit of the doubt to the one who consistently professes that his heart is clean. Sometime, perhaps, some bungling conduct might seem to belie the profession, but we repeat, let us give him the benefit of the doubt and rejoice in the salvation of our God.

And thus we conclude our consideration of the greatest problem of the ages—the sin problem. Herein is no pretense of a thorough treatise for such is impossible in this short book. Yet we have tried to face some important aspects of this greatest of all human problems.

How our hearts should respond to God when His love and grace has found an adequate solution to this greatest of all human problems. God can pardon, cleanse, and balance our lives. The power of God can so fully possess us that we will learn how to bring our humanity into moral alignment with the demands of life, revealing through our spirit and conduct a growing consistency with

the life of Christ. And then if we will but continue faithful in adding to our faith viture and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love, we shall through the power of perfect love be neither barren nor unfruitful in this present world. And, in the end, find that an abundant entrance will be ministered unto us into His everlasting kingdom.