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WHAT IS IT TO BE HOLY?

BY BISHOP HAMLIN.

"If sanctified throughout," says a tempted follower of Jesus, "why is it thus with me? I am often without joy; sometimes my mind is not perfectly composed; now and then my communion with God is interrupted; again I suffer severe inward conflicts; I am frequently unconscious of anything like triumph; and, finally, I cannot always, in these distresses, understand my condition, but am perplexed in regard to my religious state."

Let us consider, one by one, these several particulars, and see if each of them may not consist with an entirely sanctified state.

1. Does entire sanctification imply perpetual joy? From all we can learn, by consulting the written testimony of deceased and living
witnesses, and by conversing with those who bear the fruits of perfect love, this is far from being the case. One has remarked, "The prevailing state of my mind has been in no wise that of high emotion. On the contrary, there has been great calmness, placidity, and quiet of mind." This is the concurrent testimony of the pure in heart. None who profess perfect love should be shaken in mind, because their state is not one of high and joyful excitement.

2. "Sometimes my mind is not perfectly composed." This also may be true of the sanctified. The mind may become hurried through its connection with the body, that is, by nervous influences. It may also become discomposed through ignorance or misconception. In any such cases, mental disquiet does not certainly infer unsanctified affections.

3. "Now and then my communion with God is interrupted." This may be a mistake in regard to fact. What is communion with God? It does not necessarily imply unceasing rapture in prayer, nor an unvarying sense
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of God’s presence and smile, nor an equally distinct apprehension at all times of his love to us, nor an unchanging degree of assurance that we are now accepted of him. Faith without joy is communion with God. Christ communed with him when he said, “Thy will be done!” Fellowship with him, in any other sense, is not essential to entire sanctification.

4. “I suffer inward conflicts.” Yes, and so do all the sanctified. Can there be war without conflict? The Christian’s state on earth is militant. He is sanctified to prepare him for conflict. Those who are most holy are often set in the front of battle. God has trained them for his “vanguard.” They, above all Christians, should look out for sharp conflicts. They are detailed to commence assaults on Satan, and lead the sacramental host in holy onset against his legions. Of course they are marks for his arrows. All hell is aiming at their overthrow. One of these cast down is better for the cause of sin than the discomfiture of regiments of mere subalterns. Conflicts all the sanctified shall
nave. It is peculiarly their heritage. The Lord leads them into the hottest of the battle, that in and through them his grace may be made known, and the name of the blessed Jesus glorified. "At times," says the writer before quoted, "I have not been exempt from severe conflicts. Heart-searching and soul-trying questions have come up before me." The author of the "Way of Holiness" testifies the same. The sanctified have always assured us of this fact. The apostles confirm it, and Jesus Christ himself is a witness. Without conflicts, then, we cannot even deem ourselves sanctified.

5. "I am frequently unconscious of any thing like triumph." Perhaps so. But is it strange since this is our battlefield? The soldier first fights, and then triumphs. But, if infallibly secure of victory, he ought to maintain hope. This or that man may fall at his side, the carnage may be terrible; this or that wing of the army may now and then waver, or even begin to give way; the foe may press on exultingly, and seem to be bearing
down all: yet, if assured that the tide of battle will soon turn, he should hope, and bear himself courageously. But he cannot just then triumph. The shout of exultation is at present with the enemy. You say you "do not triumph." **Fight**, and you shall triumph by and by.

"**Finally, I am often perplexed in regard to my religious state.**" This involves the intellect rather than the affections. Entire sanctification does not imply perfect self-knowledge. If it did, we need not be told to "examine ourselves." We may wish to know too much. If we understood all, we should have no need to trust. Faith refers many things to God, with confessions of our ignorance. We may know and **ought** to know our general state, as that God has changed and sanctified our hearts; but we must not expect to know all the minute processes of the training work of the Spirit. Grace, as well as providence, is mysterious in many of its stages. We may know enough of both, but we cannot know all of either. It is enough, for in-
stance, to be assured that God cannot err—that all his works are done in wisdom; and that, ultimately, he will bring forth "our righteousness as the light," if we will simply "trust, and not be afraid."

To engross our thoughts briefly, we conclude that entire sanctification is not, 1, a state of perpetual rejoicing; 2, nor of constant composure; 3, nor of uninterrupted rapturous communion with God; 4, nor of perpetual freedom from conflict; 5, nor of constant inward triumph; 6, nor of unvarying clear-sightedness in regard to our inward states.

And now, to confirm these propositions, let us glance at the blessed Redeemer. In him, as the Son of man, we have a perfect example of entire sanctification. Let us, then, examine whether he was always in possession of the six things above enumerated.

1. Was he "perpetually joyful!" Turn to Matt. xxvi, 38, and Mark xiv, 34, and read his own words: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." The original denotes the greatest anguish—an inexpressible horror
of soul. From his history we should infer that, in the common acceptance, our Saviour was seldom joyful. He had no remorse, as none of his faithful followers have; but “whose sorrow is like unto his sorrow! The prophets and evangelists represent him as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The latter speak of him as rejoicing only once during the whole course of his ministry; while a characteristic scene of his life is that where, seated on the declivity of Olivet, he shed his tears, and makes his lament over the devoted metropolis of his country. If the disciples of Christ are often sorrowful, let them not forget that “his countenance” was “so marred more than any man, and his visage more than the sons of men.”

2. Did Christ maintain undisturbed mental composure? Certainly not. It was generally true of him, as it is of his faithful disciples, that while he suffered he had peace. But, in regard to both, may not the general rule, “sorrowing, yet always rejoicing,” have some exceptions, to display, as in the case of Job,
the efficacy of grace, and the glory of God? The scene of agony above referred to forbids the supposition that the mind of Jesus was never ruffled or disquieted. The narrative states that he began to be "sore amazed." The original signifies a state of overwhelming consternation.

3. Had Jesus uninterrupted communion with the Father? In the sense of confidence or resignation, doubtless he had. But we doubt whether he always had such communion as implied a sense of the Father's smile. If he had, why that expiring exclamation, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" As man, he was then forlorn of the supporting presence of his Father. Bishop Hall says, "The words, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' imply that God had, for the time, withdrawn from him the sense and vision of his comfortable presence." Dr. Scott understands, by this expression, "the total want of the light of God's countenance on his soul."

4. Had our Saviour perpetual freedom from severe conflict? Alas! his was a life of con-
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diet. It had scarcely any intermissions. Persecution without and temptation within harassed him from hour to hour. Follow him to the wilderness, where, for forty days, he endured the assaults of Satan in the most cruel form, being tempted even to fall down and worship the prince of the power of the air. And, after a trial so severe and protracted, the devil departed from him a "little season" only.

5. It is scarcely necessary to say that Jesus did not always triumph. To withstand is not properly to triumph. He always withstood. Never, under the severest assaults, did he yield, or begin to yield, to the adversary. But he often withstood in the midst of fearful anguish, such as no tongue can describe. So terrible were his conflicts, that angels were sent from heaven to comfort him. Triumph implies exultation, which, both with Christ and his followers, is the fruit of overcoming, but is not found in the mere struggle to overcome.

Lastly. Was Jesus, as man, always aware
of the necessity of his present sufferings? Were his own mental states fully understood by himself, in their relations to the salvation of man and the government of God? We hesitate to reply according to our private convictions lest we should seem inventive, and rash in our conclusions. But, with the Bible before us, we will venture to say, No. And for proof we refer to Matt. xxvi, 39, and xxvii, 46. The first reads, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The other is, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" These expressions, with an if and a why, indicate that, in his amazement and agony, the Saviour did not apprehend the exact purpose of the Father's dealings with him. He knew not as to the "cup," whether it was strictly necessary for him to drink it; or, if necessary, wherefore. And he knew not, on the cross, why "God had forsaken him." In both these cases the anguish of his soul was enhanced by a certain darkness of mind, which rendered his sorrows the more intense, and was the bitterest ingredient of the cup.
In conclusion, let us remember, "as he is, so are we in this world." "It is enough that the servant be as his Lord." Christ, as to his human nature, was sanctified. His life is a pattern for us. Whatever he was in his humanity, and no more, we may, through grace, become. He was "holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Thus we should be. But, on the other hand, he was not, as we have seen, always joyful, or composed, or in blissful communion with the Father, or free from conflicts, or in a state of triumph, or, as man, fully aware of the ends of his suffering states. Yet, in all these particulars, a certain something rendered him "holy and undefiled." If we can determine what that certain something was, we shall have discovered in what the holiness of the sanctified consists. And can we not perceive that perfect resignation marked all the Saviour’s suffering states? "Not my will, but thine be done!" Herein was he holy. Under whatever sorrows his soul was burdened and oppressed, this was his temper. And this is the test of all creature holiness.
Where there is perfect resignation, there is a perfect reign of grace. "Not my will, but thine!" Humble disciple, so long as thou canst feel and speak after this example, whether in joy or in sorrow, in composure or in disquiet, in rest or in the severest conflicts, in light or in darkness, as to the reasons of God's procedure, thou art sanctified throughout; and looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith, be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Satan desires to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat; but Christ hath prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. If Satan shake thy confidence, he hath half conquered thee already. To all his insinuations let this be thy reply, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Then turn thou believingly to the Saviour and he shall keep thee in all thy ways, and crown thee his forever.