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Sanctification

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Lectures I - IX

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In discussing the subject of Sanctification, I design to pursue the following order.

I. Define the meaning of the term sanctification.

II. What I understand by entire sanctification.

III. Notice the distinction between entire and permanent sanctification.

IV. Show what is not implied in entire sanctification.

V. What is implied in entire sanctification.

VI. Show that this state is attainable in this life.

VII. Answer some objections.

VIII. Show when it is attainable.

IX. How it is attainable.

LECTURE I.

January 1, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 1

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole

spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

It will be seen at once, that this outline is sufficiently extensive to fill a large volume, should I protract the discussion as I easily and perhaps profitably might. And at best it will occupy several lectures. My design is to condense what I have to say as much as possible, and yet preserve sufficient perspicuity. I shall endeavor not to be tedious. And yet I hope to be understood, and to be able to "commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." I will now,

I. Define the term Sanctification.

Here let me remark, that a definition of terms in all discussions is of prime importance. Especially is this true of this subject. I have observed that almost without an exception those who have written on this subject dissenting from the views entertained here, do so upon the ground that they understand and define the terms, Sanctification and Christian Perfection, differently from what we do. Every one gives his own definition, varying materially from each other and from what we understand by the terms. And then they go on professedly opposing the doctrine as inculcated here. Now this is not only utterly unfair, but palpably absurd. If I oppose a doctrine inculcated by another man I am bound to oppose what he really holds. If I misrepresent his sentiments "I fight as one that beateth the air." I have been amazed at the diversity of definitions that have been given to the terms Christian Perfection, Sanctification, &c.; and to witness the diversity of opinion as to what is, and what is not, implied in these terms. One objects wholly to the use of the term Christian Perfection, because in his estimation it implies this and that and the other thing, which I do not suppose are at all implied in it. Another objects to our using the term Sanctification, because that implies, according to his understanding of it, certain things that render its use improper. Now it is no part of my design to dispute about the use of words. I must however use some terms; and I ought to be allowed to use Bible language, in its Scriptural sense as I understand it. And if I should sufficiently explain my meaning and define the sense in which I use the terms, this ought to suffice. And I beg that nothing more nor less may be understood by the language I use than I profess to mean by it. Others may, if they please, use the same terms and give a different definition of them. But I have a right to hope and expect if they feel called upon to oppose what I say, that they will bear in mind my definition of the terms, and not pretend, as some have done, to oppose my views while they have only differed from me in their definition of the terms used, giving their own definition varying materially and I might say infinitely from the sense in which I use the same terms, and then arraying their arguments to prove that according to their definition of it, Sanctification is not really attainable in this life when no one here or any where else, that I ever heard of pretended that in their sense of the term, it ever was or ever will be attainable in this life, and I might add, or in that which is to come.

Sanctification is a term of frequent use in the Bible. Its simple and primary meaning is a state of consecration to God. To sanctify is to set apart to a holy use-- to consecrate a thing to the service of God. A state of sanctification is a state of consecration or a being set apart to the service of God. This is plainly both the Old and the New Testament use of the term.

II. What is entire Sanctification.

By entire sanctification, I understand the consecration of the whole being to God. In other words it is that state of devotedness to God and his service, required by the moral law. The law is perfect. It requires just what is right, all that is right, and nothing more. Nothing more nor less can possibly be Perfection or entire Sanctification, than obedience to the law. Obedience to the law of God in an infant, a man, an angel, and in God himself, is perfection in each of them. And nothing can possibly be perfection in any being short of this, nor can there possibly be any thing above it.

III. The distinction between entire and permanent Sanctification.

That a thing or a person may be for the time being wholly consecrated to God, and afterwards desecrated or diverted from that service, is certain. That Adam and "the angels who kept not their first estate" were entirely sanctified and yet not permanently so is also certain.

By permanent sanctification, I understand then a state not only of entire but of perpetual, unending consecration to God.

IV. What is not implied in entire Sanctification.

As the law of God is the standard and the only standard by which the question in regard to what is not, and what is implied in entire Sanctification is to be decided, it is of fundamental importance that we understand what is and what is not implied in entire obedience to this law. It must be apparent to all that this inquiry is of prime importance. And to settle this question is one of the main things to be attended to in this discussion. The doctrine of the entire sanctification of believers in this life can never be satisfactorily settled until it is understood. And it cannot be understood until it is known what is and what is not implied in it. Our judgment of our own state or of the state of others, can never be relied upon till these inquiries are settled. Nothing is more clear than that in the present vague unsettled views of the Church upon this question, no individual could set up a claim to having attained this state without being a stumbling block to the Church. Christ was perfect, and yet so erroneous were the notions of the Jews in regard to what constituted perfection that they thought him possessed with a devil instead of being holy as he claimed to be. It certainly is impossible that a person should profess this state without being a stumbling block to himself and to others unless he and they clearly understand what is not and what is implied in it. I will state then what is not implied in a state of entire sanctification, as I understand the law of God. The law as epitomized by Christ, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," I understand to lay down the whole duty of man to God and to his fellow creatures. Now the questions are what is not, and what is implied in perfect obedience to this law? Vague notions in regard to these questions seem to me to have been the origin of much error on the subject of entire sanctification. To settle this question it is indispensable that we have distinctly before our minds just rules of legal interpretation. I will therefore lay down some first principles in regard to the interpretation of law, in the light of which, I think we may safely proceed to settle these questions.

Rule 1. Whatever is inconsistent with natural justice is not and cannot be law.

Rule 2. Whatever is inconsistent with the nature and relations of moral beings, is contrary to natural justice and therefore cannot be law.

Rule 3. That which requires more than man has natural ability to perform, is inconsistent with his nature and relations and therefore is inconsistent with natural justice, and of course is not law.

Rule 4. Law then must always be so understood and interpreted as to consist with the nature of the subjects, and their relations to each other and the law-giver. Any interpretation that makes the law to require more or less than is consistent with the nature and relations of moral beings, is a virtual setting aside of law or the same as to declare that it is not law. No authority in heaven or on earth can make that law, or obligatory upon moral agents, which is inconsistent with their nature and relations.

Rule 5. Law must always be so interpreted as to cover the whole ground of natural right or justice. It must be so understood and explained as to require all that is right in itself, and therefore immutably and unalterably right.

Rule 6. Law must be so interpreted as not to require any thing more than is consistent with natural justice or with the nature and relations of moral beings.

Rule 7. Of course laws are never to be so interpreted as to imply the possession of any attributes or strength and perfection of attributes which the subject does not possess. Take for illustration the second commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now the simple meaning of this commandment seems to be that we are to regard and treat every person and interest according to its relative value. Now we are not to understand this commandment as expressly or impliedly requiring us to know in all cases the exact relative value of every person and thing in the universe; for this would imply the possession of the attribute of omniscience by us. No mind short of an omniscient one can have this knowledge. The commandment then must be so understood as only to require us to judge with candor of the relative value of different interests, and treat them according to their value so far as we understand it. I repeat the rule therefore. Laws are never to be so interpreted as to imply the possession of any attribute or strength and perfection of attributes which the subject does not possess.

Rule 8. Law is never to be so interpreted as to require that which is naturally impossible on account of our circumstances. E.g.: The first commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c." is not to be so interpreted as to require us to make God the constant and sole object of attention, thought, and affection, for this would not only be plainly impossible in our circumstance but manifestly contrary to our duty.

Rule 9. Law is never to be so interpreted as to make one requirement inconsistent with another; e.g.: if the first commandment be so interpreted that we are required to make God the only object of thought, attention, and affection, then we cannot obey the second commandment which requires us to love our neighbor. And if the first commandment is to be so understood that every faculty and power is to be directed solely and exclusively to the contemplation and love of God, then love to all other beings is prohibited and the second commandment is set aside. I repeat the rule therefore. Laws are not to be so

interpreted as to conflict with each other.

Rule 10. A law requiring perpetual benevolence must be so construed as to consist with and require all the appropriate and essential modifications of this principle under every circumstance; such as justice, mercy, anger at sin and sinners, and a special and complacent regard to those who are virtuous.

Rule 11. Law must be so interpreted as that its claims shall always be restricted to the voluntary powers. To attempt to legislate over the involuntary powers would be inconsistent with natural justice. You may as well attempt to legislate over the beatings of the heart as over any involuntary mental actions.

Rule 12. In morals, actual knowledge is indispensable to obligation. The maxim, "ignorantia legis non excusat"-- ignorance of the law excuses no one, applies in morals to but a very limited extent. That actual knowledge is indispensable to moral obligation, will appear,

(1.) From the following Scriptures:

James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Luke 12:47-48, "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.; and to whom men have committed much, of them they will ask the more." John 9:41, "Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth." In the first and second chapters of Romans, the Apostle reasons at large on this subject. He convicts the heathen of sin, upon the ground that they violate their own conscience, and do not live according to the light they have.

(2.) The principle is every where recognized in the Bible, that an increase of knowledge increases obligation. This impliedly, but plainly recognizes the principle that knowledge is indispensable to, and commensurate with obligation. In sins of ignorance, the sin lies in the ignorance itself, but not in the neglect of what is unknown. A man may be guilty of present or past neglect to ascertain the truth. Here his ignorance is sin. The heathen are culpable for not living up to the light of nature; but are under no obligation to embrace Christianity until they have the opportunity to do so.

Rule 13. Moral laws are to be so interpreted as to be consistent with physical laws. In other words, the application of the moral law to human beings, must recognize man as he is, as both a physical and intellectual being; and must never be so interpreted as that obedience to it would violate the laws of the physical constitution, and prove the destruction of the body.

Rule 14. Law is to be so interpreted as to recognize all the attributes and circumstances of both body and soul. In the application of the law of God to human beings, we are to regard their powers and attributes as they really are, and not as they are not.

Rule 15. Law is to be so interpreted as to restrict its obligation to the actions, and not to the nature, or constitution of moral beings. Law must not be understood as extending its legislation to the nature, or requiring a man to possess certain attributes, but as prescribing a rule of action. It is not the existence or possession of certain attributes which the law requires, or that these attributes should be in a certain state of perfection, but the right use of all these attributes as they are, is what the law is to be interpreted as requiring.

Rule 16. It should be always understood that the obedience of the heart to any law, implies and includes general faith, or confidence in the lawgiver. But no law should be so construed as to require faith in what the intellect does not perceive. A man may be under obligation to perceive what he does not; i.e.: it may be his duty to inquire after, and ascertain the truth. But obligation to believe with the heart, does not attach until the intellect obtains a perception of the things to be believed.

Now, in the light of these rules, let us proceed to inquire,

1. What is not, and,

2. What is implied in perfect obedience to the law of God, or in entire sanctification.

- 1. Entire sanctification does not imply any change in the substance of the soul or body, for this the law does not require, and it would not be obligatory if it did, because the requirement would be inconsistent with natural justice. Entire sanctification is the entire consecration of the powers, as they are, to God. It does not imply any change in them, but simply in the use of them.
- 2. It does not imply any annihilation of constitutional traits of character, such as constitutional ardor or impetuosity. There is nothing certainly, in the law of God that requires such constitutional traits to be annihilated, but simply that they should be rightly directed in their exercise.
- 3. It does not imply the annihilation of any of the constitutional appetites, or susceptibilities. It seems to be supposed by some, that the constitutional appetites and susceptibilities, are in themselves sinful, and that a state of entire sanctification would imply their entire annihilation. And I have often been astonished at the fact that those who array themselves against the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, assume the sinfulness of the constitution of men. And I have not been a little surprised to find that some persons who I had supposed were far enough from embracing the doctrine of physical depravity, were, after all, resorting to this assumption to set aside the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. But let us appeal to the law. Does the law any where, expressly or impliedly, condemn the constitution of man, or

require the annihilation of any thing that is properly a part of the constitution itself? Does it require the annihilation of the appetite for food, or is it satisfied merely with regulating its indulgence? In short, does the law of God any where require any thing more than the consecration of all the appetites and susceptibilities of the body and mind, to the service of God?

In conversing with a brother, upon this subject, not long since, he insisted that a man might perpetually obey the law of God and be guilty of no actual transgression, and yet not be entirely sanctified: for he insisted that there might be that in him which would lay the foundation for his sinning at a future time. When questioned in regard to what that something in him was, he replied, "that which first led him to sin at the beginning of his moral existence." I answered that that which first led him to sin, was his innocent constitution, just as it was the innocent constitution of Adam, to which the temptation was addressed, that led him into sin. Adam's innocent constitutional appetites, when excited by the presence of objects fitted to excite them, were a sufficient temptation to lead him to consent to prohibited indulgence, which constituted his sin. Now just so it certainly is with every human being. This constitution, the substance of his body and soul, cannot certainly have any moral character. But when these appetites which are essential to his nature and have no moral character in themselves are excited, they lead to prohibited indulgence, and in this way every human being is led into sin. Now if a man cannot be entirely sanctified until that is annihilated which first occasioned his sin, it does not appear that he ever can be entirely sanctified while he possesses either body or soul. I insist upon it, therefore, that entire sanctification does not imply the annihilation of any constitutional appetite or susceptibility, but only the entire consecration of the whole constitution as it is, to the service of God.

- 4. Entire sanctification does not imply the annihilation of natural affection or resentment. By this I mean that certain persons may be naturally pleasing to us. Christ appears to have had a natural affection for John. By natural resentment I mean, that, from the laws of our being, we must resent or feel opposed to injustice or ill treatment. Not that a disposition to retaliate or revenge ourselves is consistent with the law of God. But perfect obedience to the law of God, does not imply that we should have no sense of injury or injustice, when we are abused. God has this, and ought to have it, and so does every moral being. To love your neighbor as yourself does not imply, that if he injure you, you feel no sense of the injury or injustice, but that you love him and would do him good, notwithstanding his injurious treatment.
- 5. It does not imply any degree of unhealthy excitement of mind. Rule 13 lays down the principal that moral law is to be so interpreted as to be consistent with physical law. God's laws certainly do not clash with each other. And the moral law cannot require such a state of constant mental excitement as will destroy the physical constitution. It cannot require any more mental excitement and action than is consistent with all the laws, attributes, and circumstances of both soul and body, as stated in rule 14.
- 6. It does not imply that any organ or faculty is to be at all times exerted to its full strength. This would soon exhaust and destroy any and every organ of the body. Whatever may be true of the mind, when separated from the body, it is certain, while it acts through a material organ, that a

constant state of excitement is impossible. When the mind is strongly excited, there is of necessity a great determination of blood to the brain. A high degree of excitement cannot long continue, certainly, without producing inflammation of the brain, and consequent insanity. And the law of God does not require any degree of emotion, or mental excitement, that is inconsistent with life and health. Our Lord Jesus Christ does not appear to have been in a state of continual excitement. When he and his disciples had been in a great excitement for a time, they would turn aside "and rest awhile."

Who, that has ever philosophized on this subject, does not know that the high degree of excitement which is sometimes witnessed in revivals of religion, must necessarily be short, or that the people must become deranged. It seems sometimes to be indispensable, that a high degree of excitement should prevail for a time, to arrest public and individual attention, and to draw people off from other pursuits, to attend to the concerns of their souls. But if any suppose that this high degree of excitement is either necessary, or desirable, or possible, to be long continued, they have not well considered the matter. And here is one grand mistake of the Church. They have supposed that the revival consists mostly in this state of excited emotion, rather than in conformity of the human will to the will of God. Hence, when the reasons for much excitement have ceased, and the public mind begins to grow more calm, they begin immediately to say that the revival is on the decline; when, in fact, with much less excited emotion, there may be vastly more real religion in the community.

Excitement is often important and indispensable. But the vigorous actings of the will are infinitely more important. And this state of mind may exist in the absence of highly excited emotions.

- 7. Nor does it imply that the same degree of emotion, volition, or intellectual effort, is at all times required. All volitions do not need the same strength. They cannot have equal strength, because they are not produced by equally powerful reasons. Should a man put forth as strong a volition to pick up an apple, as to extinguish the flames of a burning house? Should a mother, watching over her sleeping nursling, when all is quiet and secure, put forth as powerful volitions, as might be required to snatch it from the devouring flames? Now, suppose that she was equally devoted to God in watching her sleeping babe, and in rescuing it from the jaws of death. Her holiness would not consist in the fact that she exercised equally strong volitions, in both cases; but, that in both cases, the volition was equal to the accomplishment of the thing required to be done. So that persons may be entirely holy, and yet continually varying in the strength of their affections, according to their circumstances-- the state of their physical system-- and the business in which they are engaged.

All the powers of body and mind are to be held at the service and disposal of God. Just so much of physical, intellectual, and moral energy are to be expended in the performance of duty as the nature and the circumstances of the case require. And nothing is further from the truth, than that the law of God requires a constant, intense state of emotion and mental action on any and every subject alike.

- 8. Entire sanctification does not imply that God is to be at all times the direct object of attention

and affection. This is not only impossible in the nature of the case, but would render it impossible for us to think of or love our neighbor or ourselves: Rule 9.

Upon this subject in a former lecture, I used the following language. The law of God requires the supreme love of the heart. By this is meant, that the mind's supreme preference should be of God-- that God should be the great object of its supreme love and delight. But this state of mind is perfectly consistent with our engaging in any of the necessary business of life-- giving to that business that attention-- and exercising about it all those affections and emotions which its nature and importance demand.

If a man love God supremely, and engage in any business, for the promotion of his glory, if his eye be single, his affections and conduct are entirely holy, when necessarily engaged in the right transaction of his business, although for the time being, neither his thought or affection are upon God.

Just as a man who is supremely devoted to his family may be acting consistently with his supreme affection, and rendering them the most important and perfect service, while he does not think of them at all. As I have endeavored to show, in my lecture on the text, "Make to yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit," I consider the moral heart to be the mind's supreme preference. As I there stated, the natural, or fleshy heart, is the seat of animal life, and propels the blood through all the physical system. Now there is a striking analogy between this and the moral heart. And the analogy consists in this, that as the natural heart, by its pulsations diffuses life through the physical system; so the moral heart, or the supreme governing preference of the mind is that which gives life and character to man's moral actions; (e.g.,) suppose that I am engaged in teaching Mathematics. In this, the supreme desire of my mind is to glorify God, in this particular calling. Now in demonstrating some of its intricate propositions, I am obliged, for hours together, to give the entire attention of my mind to that object. Now, while my mind is thus intensely employed in this particular business, it is impossible that I should have any thoughts directly about God, or should exercise any direct affections, or emotions, or volitions towards him. Yet if, in this particular calling, all selfishness is excluded, and my supreme design is to glorify God, my mind is in a sanctified state, even though for the time being, I do not think of God.

It should be understood, that while the supreme preference of the mind has such efficiency, as to exclude all selfishness, and to call forth just that strength of volition, thought, affection, and emotion, that is requisite to the right discharge of any duty, to which the mind may be called, the heart is in a sanctified state. By a suitable degree of thought, and feeling, to the right discharge of duty, I mean just that intensity of thought, and energy of action, that the nature and importance of the particular duty to which, for the time being, I am called, demand.

In this statement, I take it for granted, that the brain, together with all the circumstances of the constitution are such, that the requisite amount of thought, feeling, &c. are possible. If the physical constitution, be in such a state of exhaustion as to be unable to put forth that amount of exertion which the nature of the subject might otherwise

demand, even in this case, the languid efforts, though far below the importance of the subject, would be all that the law of God requires. Whoever, therefore supposes that a state of entire sanctification, implies a state of entire abstraction of mind, from every thing but God, labors under a grievous mistake. Such a state of mind is as inconsistent with duty, as it is impossible, while we are in the flesh.

The fact is that the language and spirit of the law have been and generally are grossly misunderstood, and interpreted to mean what they never did, or can mean consistently with natural justice. Many a mind has been thrown open to the assaults of Satan, and kept in a state of continual bondage and condemnation, because God was not, at all times, the direct object of thought, affection, and emotion; and because the mind was not kept in a state of most perfect tension, and excited to the utmost at every moment.

- 9. Nor does it imply a state of continual calmness of mind. Christ was not in a state of continual calmness. The deep peace of his mind was never broken up, but the surface or emotions of his mind were often in a state of great excitement, and at other times in a state of great calmness. And here let me refer to Christ, as we have his history in the Bible, in illustration of the positions I have already taken, e.g. Christ had all the constitutional appetites and susceptibilities of human nature. Had it been otherwise, he could not have been "tempted in all points like as we are;" nor could he have been tempted in any point as we are, any further than he possessed a constitution similar to our own. Christ also manifested natural affection for his mother, and for other friends. He also showed that he had a sense of injury and injustice, and exercised a suitable resentment when he was injured and persecuted. He was not always in a state of great excitement. He appears to have had his seasons of excitement and of calm,-- of labor and rest,-- of joy and sorrow, like other good men. Some persons have spoken of entire sanctification as implying a state of uniform and universal calmness, and as if every kind and degree of excited feeling, except as the feelings of love to God are excited, were inconsistent with this state. But Christ often manifested a great degree of excitement when reproving the enemies of God. In short his history would lead to the conclusion that his calmness and excitement were various, according to the circumstances of the case. And although he was sometimes so pointed and severe in his reproof, as to be accused of being possessed of a devil, yet his emotions and feelings were only those that were called for and suited to the occasions.
- 10. Nor does it imply a state of continual sweetness of mind without any indignation or holy anger at sin or sinners. Anger at sin is only a modification of love. A feeling of justice, or a desire to have the wicked punished for the benefit of the government, is only another of the modifications of love. And such feelings are essential to the existence of love, where the circumstances call for their existence. It is said of Christ that he was angry. He often manifested anger and holy indignation. "God is angry with the wicked every day." And holiness, or a state of sanctification, instead of being inconsistent with, always implies the existence of anger, whenever circumstances occur, which demand its exercise: Rule 10.
- 11. It does not imply a state of mind that is all compassion, and no feeling of justice. Compassion is only one of the modifications of love. Justice, or a desire for the execution of law, and the punishment of sin is another of its modifications. God and Christ, and all holy beings, exercise all those affections and emotions that constitute the different modifications of

love, under every possible circumstance.

- 12. It does not imply that we should love or hate all men alike, irrespective of their value, circumstances, and relations. One being may have a greater capacity for happiness, and be of much more importance to the universe than another. Impartiality and the law of love require us not to regard all beings and things alike; but all beings and things according to their nature, relations and circumstances.
- 13. Nor does it imply a perfect knowledge of all our relations: rule 7. Now such an interpretation of the law, as would make it necessary, in order to yield obedience, for us to understand all our relations, would imply in us the possession of the attribute of omniscience; for certainly there is not a thing in the universe to which we do not sustain some relation. And a knowledge of all these relations, plainly implies infinite knowledge. It is plain that the law of God cannot require any such thing as this; and that entire sanctification or entire obedience to the law of God therefore implies no such thing.
- 14. Nor does it imply perfect knowledge on any subject. Perfect knowledge on any subject, implies a perfect knowledge of its nature, relations, bearings and tendencies. Now as every single thing in the universe sustains some relation to and has some bearing upon every other thing, there can be no such thing as perfect knowledge on any one subject, that does not embrace universal or infinite knowledge.
- 15. Nor does it imply freedom from mistake on any subject whatever. It is maintained by some that the grace of the gospel pledges to every man perfect knowledge, or at least such knowledge as to exempt him from any mistake. I cannot stop here to debate this question, but would merely say the law does not expressly or impliedly require infallibility of judgment in us. It only requires us to make the best use of all the light we have.
- 16. Nor does entire sanctification imply the knowledge of the exact relative value of different interests. I have already said in illustrating rule 7, that the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" does not imply that we should, in every instance, understand exactly the relative value and importance of every interest. This plainly cannot be required, unless it be assumed that we are omniscient.
- 17. It does not imply the same degree of knowledge that we might have possessed, had we always improved our time in its acquisition. The law cannot require us to love God or man as well as we might have been able to love them, had we always improved all our time in obtaining all the knowledge we could, in regard to their nature, character, and interests. If this were implied in the requisition of the law, there is not a saint on earth or in heaven that is or ever can be perfect. What is lost in this respect is lost, and past neglect can never be so atoned for as that we shall ever be able to make up in our acquisitions of knowledge, what we have lost. It will no doubt be true to all eternity, that we shall have less knowledge than we might have possessed, had we filled up all our time in its acquisition. We do not, cannot, nor shall we ever be able to love God as well as we might have loved him, had we always applied our minds to the acquisition of knowledge respecting him. And if entire sanctification is to be understood

as implying that we love God as much as we should, had we all the knowledge we might have had, then I repeat it, there is not a saint on earth or in heaven, nor ever will be, that is entirely sanctified.

- 18. It does not imply the same amount of service that we might have rendered, had we never sinned. The law of God does not imply or suppose that our powers are in a perfect state; that our strength of body or mind is what it would have been, had we never sinned. But it simply requires us to use what strength we have. The very wording of the law is proof conclusive, that it extends its demands only to the full amount of what strength we have. And this is true of every moral being, however great or small.
- 19. It does not require the same degree of love that we might have rendered, but for our ignorance. We certainly know much less of God, and therefore are much less capable of loving him, i.e. we are capable of loving him with a less amount, and to a less degree than if we knew more of him, which we might have done but for our sins. And as I have before said, this will be true to all eternity; for we can never make amends by any future obedience, or diligence for this any more than for other sins. And to all eternity, it will remain true, that we know less of God, and love him less than we might and should have done, had we always done our duty. If entire sanctification therefore, implies the same degree of love or service that might have been rendered, had we always developed our powers by a perfect use of them, then there is not a saint on earth or in heaven that is or ever will be in that state. The most perfect development and improvement of our powers, must depend upon the most perfect use of them. And every departure from their perfect use, is a diminishing of their highest development, and a curtailing of their capabilities to serve God in the highest and best manner. All sin then does just so much towards crippling and curtailing the powers of body and mind, and rendering them, by just so much, incapable of performing the service they might otherwise have rendered.

To this view of the subject it has been objected that Christ taught an opposite doctrine, in the case of the woman who washed his feet with her tears, when he said, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." But can it be that Christ intended to be understood as teaching, that the more we sin the greater will be our love and our ultimate virtue? If this be so I do not see why it does not follow that the more sin in this life, the better, if so be that we are forgiven. If our virtue is really to be improved by our sins, I see not why it would not be good economy both for God and man, to sin as much as we can while in this world. Certainly Christ meant to lay down no such principle as this. He undoubtedly meant to teach, that a person who was truly sensible of the greatness of his sins, would exercise more of the love of gratitude, than would be exercised by one who had a less affecting sense of ill-desert.

- 20. Entire sanctification does not imply the same degree of faith that might have been exercised but for our ignorance and past sin.

We cannot believe any thing about God of which we have no evidence or knowledge. Our faith must therefore be limited by our intellectual perceptions of truth. The heathen are not under obligation to believe in Christ, and thousands of other things of which they have no knowledge. Perfection in a heathen would imply much less faith than in a

Christian. Perfection in an adult would imply much more and greater faith than in an infant. And perfection in an angel would imply much greater faith than in a man, just in proportion as he knows more of God than man. Let it be always understood that entire sanctification never implies that which is naturally impossible. It is certainly naturally impossible for us to believe that of which we have no knowledge. Entire sanctification implies in this respect nothing more than the heart's faith or confidence in all the truth that is perceived by the intellect.

- 21. Nor does it imply the conversion of all men in answer to our prayers. It has been maintained by some that a state of entire sanctification implies the offering of prevailing prayer for the conversion of all men. To this I reply,
 - (1.) Then Christ was not sanctified; for he offered no such prayer.
 - (2.) The law of God makes no such demand either expressly or impliedly.
 - (3.) We have no right to believe that all men will be converted in answer to our prayers, unless we have an express promise to that effect.
 - (4.) As therefore there is no such promise, we are under no obligation to offer such prayer. Nor does the non-conversion of the world, imply that there are no sanctified saints in the world.
- 22. It does not imply the conversion of any one for whom there is not an express or implied promise in the word of God. The fact that Judas was not converted in answer to Christ's prayers, does not prove that Christ was not in a state of entire sanctification.
- 23. Nor does it imply that all those things which are expressly or impliedly promised, will be granted in answer to our prayers, or in other words, that we should pray in faith for them, if we are ignorant of the existence or application of those promises. A state of perfect love implies the discharge of all known duty. And nothing strictly speaking can be duty of which the mind has no knowledge. It cannot therefore be our duty to believe a promise of which we are entirely ignorant, or the application of which to any specific object we do not understand.

If there is sin in such a case as this, it lies in the ignorance itself. And here no doubt, there often is sin, because there is present neglect to know the truth. But it should always be understood that the sin lies in the ignorance, and not in the neglect of that of which we have no knowledge. A state of sanctification is inconsistent with any present neglect to know the truth; for such neglect is sin. But it is not inconsistent with our failing to do that of which we have no knowledge. James says: "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "If ye were blind," says Christ, "ye should have no sin, but because ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth."

- 24. Entire sanctification does not imply the impossibility of future sin. Entire and permanent sanctification does imply the fact, that the sanctified soul will not sin. But the only reason why he will not, is to be ascribed entirely to the sovereign grace of God. Sanctification does not

imply, as I have already said, any such change in the nature of the subject, as to render it impossible or improbable that he will again sin. Nay, I do not suppose there is a man upon earth, or perhaps in heaven, who would not fall into sin but for the supporting grace of God.

- 25. It does not imply that watchfulness, and prayer, and effort, are no longer needed. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that, either in this or any other state of being, there will be no faith called for, or watchfulness against temptation. Just so long as the susceptibilities of our soul exist, temptation in some sense and to some extent must exist, in whatever world we are. Christ manifestly struggled hard with temptation. He found watchfulness and the most powerful opposition to temptation, indispensable to his perseverance in holiness. "Is the servant above his master, or the disciple above his Lord?"
- 26. Nor does it imply that we are no longer dependent on the grace of Christ, but the exact opposite is implied. A state of entire and permanent sanctification implies the most constant and perfect dependence upon the grace and strength of an indwelling Christ. It seems to have been supposed by some that entire sanctification implies that something has been done which has so changed the nature of the sanctified soul, that ever after he will persevere in holiness in his own strength. I suppose this to be as far as possible from the truth, and that no change whatever has occurred in the nature of the individual, but simply that he has learned to confide in Christ at every step. He has so received Christ's strength as to lean constantly upon his supporting grace.
- 27. Nor does it imply that the Christian warfare is ended. I understand the Christian warfare to consist in the mind's conflict with temptation. This certainly will never end in this life.
- 28. Nor does it imply that there is no more growth in grace. Many persons seem to understand the command "grow in grace," as implying the gradual giving up of sin. They suppose that when persons have done sinning, there is no more room for growth in grace. Now it is said of Christ that he grew in grace, where the same original word is used as in the command. "He increased in stature and in wisdom, and in favor (kariti, grace) with God and man." If growth in grace implies the gradual giving up of sin, then God has commanded men not to give up their sins at once. They must give them up gradually. The truth is that growth in grace implies the relinquishment of sin to begin with. To grow in grace is to grow in the favor of God. And what would the Apostle have said, had he supposed that the requirement to grow in grace, would have been understood by an orthodox Church to require only the gradual relinquishment of their sins? I suppose that saints will continue to grow in grace to all eternity, and in the knowledge of God. But this does not imply that they are not entirely holy, when they enter heaven, or before.
- 29. Nor does it imply that others will recognize it to be real sanctification. With the present views of the Church in regard to what is implied in entire sanctification, it is impossible that a really sanctified soul should be acknowledged by the Church as such. And with these views of the Church, there is no doubt but sanctified believers would be set at nought, and denounced by the great mass of Christians as possessing any other than a sanctified spirit.

It was insisted, and positively believed by the Jews, that Jesus Christ was possessed of a wicked, instead of a holy spirit. Such were their notions of holiness, that they no doubt supposed him to be actuated by any other than the Spirit of God. They especially

supposed so on account of his opposition to the current orthodoxy, and the ungodliness of the religious teachers of the day. Now, who does not see that when the Church is in a great measure conformed to the world, that a spirit of holiness in any man, would certainly lead him to aim the sharpest rebukes at the spirit and life of those in this state, whether in high or low places. And who does not see that this would naturally result in his being accused of possessing a wicked spirit?

The most violent opposition that I have ever seen manifested to any persons in my life, has been manifested by members of the Church, and even by some ministers of the gospel, towards those whom I believe were among the most holy persons I ever knew. I have been shocked, and wounded beyond expression, at the almost fiendish opposition to such persons, that I have witnessed. I have several times of late observed that writers in newspapers were calling for examples of Christian Perfection or entire sanctification. Now I would humbly inquire, of what use it is to point the Church to examples, so long as they do not know what is, and what is not implied in a state of entire sanctification? I would ask, are the Church agreed among themselves in regard to what constitutes this state? Are any considerable number of ministers agreed among themselves as to what is implied in a state of entire sanctification? Now does not everybody know that the Church and the ministry are in a great measure in the dark upon this subject? Why then call for examples? No man can possess this state without being sure to be set at nought as a hypocrite, and a self-deceiver.

- 30. It is not implied in this state that the sanctified soul will himself always at the time be sure that his feelings and conduct are perfectly right. Cases may occur in which he may be in doubt in regard to the rule of duty; and be at a loss, without examination, reflection, and prayer, to know whether in a particular case he has done and felt exactly right. If he were sure that he understood the exact application of the law of God to that particular case, his consciousness would invariably inform him whether or not he was conformed to that rule. But in any and every case where he has not a clear apprehension of the rule, it may require time and thought, and prayer, and diligent inquiry to satisfy his mind in regard to the exact moral quality of any particular act or state of feeling; e.g. A man may feel himself exercised with strong indignation in view of sin. And he may be brought into doubt whether the indignation, in kind or degree, was not sinful. It may therefore require self-examination and deep searching of heart to decide this question. That all indignation is not sinful is certain. And that a certain kind and degree of indignation at sin is a duty, is also certain. But our most holy exercises may lay us open to the assaults of Satan. And he may so turn our accuser as for a time to render it difficult for us to decide in regard to the real state of our hearts. And thus a sanctified soul may be "in heaviness through manifold temptations."
- 31. Nor does it imply the same strength of holy affection that Adam may have exercised before he fell, and his powers were debilitated by sin. It should never be forgotten that the mind in this state of existence, is wholly dependent upon the brain and physical system for its development. In Adam, and in any of his posterity, any violation of the physical laws of the body, resulting in the debility and imperfection of any organ or system of organs, must necessarily impair the vigor of the mind, and prevent its developing itself as it otherwise might have done. It is therefore entirely erroneous to say that mankind are or can be, in this state of existence, perfect

in as high a sense as they might have been had sin never entered the world, and had there been no such thing as a violation of the laws of the physical constitution. The law of God requires only the entire consecration of such powers as we have. As these powers improve our obligation is enlarged, and will continue to be to all eternity. For myself, I have very little doubt that the human constitution is capable of being very nearly, if not entirely renovated or recovered from the evils of intemperance, by a right understanding of, and an adherence to the laws of life and health. So that after a few generations the human body would be nearly if not entirely restored to its primitive physical perfection. If this is so, the time may come when obedience to the law of God, will imply as great strength and constancy of affection as Adam was capable of exercising before the fall. But if on the other hand, it be true that any injury of the physical constitution can never be wholly repaired-- that the evils of sin in respect to its effect upon the body, are, in some measure at least, to descend with men to the end of time, then no such thing is implied in a state of entire sanctification, as the same strength and permanency of holy affection in us that Adam might have exercised before the fall.

- 32. Nor does it imply the formation of such holy habits as shall secure obedience. Some have said that it was absurd to profess a state of entire sanctification, on the ground that it implies not only obedience to the law of God, but such a formation and perfection of holy habits as to render it certain that we shall never again sin. And that a man can no more tell when he is entirely sanctified, than he can tell how many holy acts it will take to form holy habits of such strength that he will never again sin. To this I answer,
 - (1.) The law of God has nothing to do with requiring this formation of holy habits. It is satisfied with present obedience. It only demands at the present moment the full devotion of all our powers to God. It never in any instance complains that we have not formed such holy habits as to render it certain that we shall sin no more.
 - (2.) If it be true that a man is never wholly sanctified until his holy habits are so fixed as to render it certain that he will never sin again, then Adam was not in a state of entire sanctification previously to the fall, nor were the angels in this state before their fall.
 - (3.) If this sentiment be true, there is not a saint nor an angel in heaven so far as we can know, that can with the least propriety profess entire sanctification; for how do they know that they have performed so many holy acts as to have created such habits of holiness as to render it certain that they will never more sin?
 - (4.) Entire sanctification does not consist in the formation of holy habits, nor at all depend upon this. Both entire and permanent sanctification are based alone upon the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And perseverance in holiness is to be ascribed alone to the influence of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, instead of being secured by any habits of holiness which we have or ever shall form.
- 33. Nor does it imply exemption from sorrow or mental suffering.

It was not so with Christ. Nor is it inconsistent with our sorrowing for our own past sins, and sorrowing that we have not now the health and vigor, and knowledge, and love, that

we might have had, if we had sinned less; or sorrow for those around us-- sorrow in view of human sinfulness, or suffering. These are all consistent with a state of entire sanctification, and indeed are the natural results of it.

- 34. Nor is it inconsistent with our living in human society-- with mingling in the scenes, and engaging in the affairs of this world. Some have supposed that to be holy we must withdraw from the world. Hence the absurd and ridiculous notions of papists in retiring to monasteries, and convents-- in taking the veil, and as they say, retiring to a life of devotion. Now I suppose this state of voluntary exclusion from human society, to be utterly inconsistent with any degree of holiness, and a manifest violation of the law of love to our neighbor.
- 35. Nor does it imply moroseness of temper and manners. Nothing is farther from the truth than this. It is said of Xavier, than whom, perhaps, few holier men have ever lived, that "he was so cheerful as often to be accused of being gay." Cheerfulness is certainly the result of holy affections-- and sanctification no more implies moroseness in this world than it does in heaven.

Before I proceed to the next head of my discourse, (having said these things, and given these rules of interpretation so that you can apply the principle to many things I have not time to notice) I wish to make the following remark.

In all the discussions I have seen upon this subject, while it seems to be admitted that the law of God is the standard of perfection, yet in defining what constitutes Christian perfection or entire sanctification, men entirely lose sight of this standard, and seldom or never raise the distinct inquiry; what does obedience to this law imply, and what does it not imply. Instead of bringing every thing to this test, they seem to lose sight of it. On the one hand they bring in things that never were required by the law of God of man in his present state. Thus they lay a stumbling block and a snare for the saints, to keep them in perpetual bondage, supposing that this is the way to keep them humble, to place the standard entirely above their reach. Or, on the other hand, they really abrogate the law, so as to make it no longer binding. Or they so fritter away what is really implied in it, as to leave nothing in its requirements, but a kind of sickly, whimsical, inefficient sentimentalism, or perfectionism, which in its manifestations and results, appears to me to be any thing else than that which the law of God requires.

LECTURE II.

January 15, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 2

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

I come now to show,

IV. What is implied in entire Sanctification.

Under this head, I shall refer to and repeat some things (as I have already done) which I said a number of months since in my lectures on the law of God.

- 1. Love is the sum of all that is implied in entire Sanctification. But I may and should be asked what is the kind of love implied? I shall consider the kind of love to be exercised towards God.
 - (1.) It is to be love of the heart, and not a mere emotion. By the heart I mean the will. Emotions, or what are generally termed feelings, are always involuntary states of mind, and no further than they are indirectly under the control of the will, have they any moral character; i.e. they are not choices or volitions, and of course do not govern the conduct. Love, in the form of an emotion, may exist in opposition to the will; e.g. we may exercise emotions of love contrary to our conscience and judgment, and in opposition to our will. Thus the sexes often exercise emotions of love towards those to whom all the voluntary powers of their mind feel opposed, and with whom they will not associate. It is true, that in most cases, the emotions are with the will. But they are sometimes, nay often opposed to it.

Now, it is a voluntary state of mind that the law of God requires; i.e. it lays its claims upon the will. The will controls the conduct. And it is, therefore, of course, the love of the heart or will that God requires.
 - (2.) Benevolence is one of the modifications of love which we are to exercise towards God. Benevolence is good will. And certainly we are bound to exercise this kind of love to God. It is a dictate of reason, of conscience, of common sense, and of immutable justice, that we should exercise good and not ill-will to God. It matters not whether he needs our good will or whether our good or ill-will can in any way affect him-- the question does not respect his necessities, but deserts.
 - (3.) Another modification of this love, is that of complacency or esteem. God's character is infinitely good. We are therefore bound, not merely to love him, with the love of benevolence; but to exercise the highest degree of complacency in his character. To say that God is good and lovely is merely to say that he deserves to be loved. If he deserves to be loved, on account of his goodness and love, then he deserves to be loved in proportion to his goodness and loveliness. Our obligation, therefore is infinitely great to exercise toward him the highest degree of the love of complacency of which we are capable. These remarks are confirmed by the Bible, by reason, by conscience and by common sense.
 - (4.) Another modification of this love is that of gratitude. As every moral being is constantly receiving favors from God, it is self-evident that love in the form of gratitude is universally obligatory.

- (5.) Another peculiarity of this love which must, by no means, be overlooked, is that it must be disinterested; i.e. that we should not love him for selfish reasons. But that we should love him for what he is-- with benevolence; because his well-being is an infinite good-- with complacency; because his character is infinitely excellent-- with the heart; because all virtue belongs to the heart. It is plain, that nothing short of disinterested love is virtue. The Savior recognizes and settles this truth, in Luke 6:32-34: "For if ye love them who love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." These words epitomize the whole doctrine of the Bible on this subject, and lay down the broad principle, that to love God, or any one else, for selfish reasons, is not virtue.
- (6.) Another peculiarity of this love is that it must be in every instance supreme. Any thing less than supreme love to God, must be idolatry. If any thing else is loved more, that is our God.

I have been surprised to learn that some understand the term supreme in a comparative sense, and not in a superlative sense. They suppose therefore that the law of God requires more than supreme love. Webster's definition of supreme and supremely is "in the highest degree," "to the utmost extent." I understand the law to require as high a state of devotion to God, of love and actual service as the powers of body and mind are capable of sustaining.

Observe, that God lays great stress upon the degree of love. So that the degree is essential to the kind of love. If it be not supreme in degree it is wholly defective and in no sense acceptable to God.

I will now consider the kind of love to be exercised towards our fellow men.

- (1.) It must be the love of the heart, and not mere desire or emotion. It is very natural to desire the good of others-- to pity the distressed-- and to feel strong emotions of compassion towards those who are afflicted. But these emotions are not virtue. Unless we will their good, as well as desire it, it is of no avail. James 2:15, 16: "If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled;' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Now here the Apostle fully recognized the principle, that mere desire for the good of others, which of course will satisfy itself with good words instead of good deeds, is not virtue. If it were good willing, instead of good desiring, it would produce corresponding actions; and unless it is good willing, there is no holiness in it.

- (2.) Benevolence to men is a prime modification of holy love. This is included in what I

have said above, but needs to be expressly stated and explained. It is a plain dictate of reason, of conscience, of common sense, and immutable justice, that we should exercise good will towards our fellow men-- that we should will their good, in proportion to its relative importance-- that we should rejoice in their happiness, and endeavor to promote it, according to its relative value in the scale of being.

- (3.) Complacency towards those that are virtuous is another modification of holy love. I say towards those that are virtuous, because while we exercise benevolence towards all, irrespective of their character, we have a right to exercise complacency towards those only who are holy, To exercise complacency towards the wicked is to be as wicked as they are. But to exercise complacency in those that are holy, is to be ourselves holy.
- (4.) This love is to be in every instance equal. By equal I do not mean that degree of love which selfish beings have for themselves; for this is supreme. There is a grand distinction between self-love and selfishness. Self-love is that benevolence to self or regard for our own interest, which its intrinsic importance demands. Selfishness is the excess of self-love: i.e. it is supreme self-love-- it is making our own happiness the supreme object of pursuit, because it is our own. And not attaching that importance to other's interests, and the happiness of other beings, which their relative value demands. A selfish mind is therefore in the exercise of the supreme love of self.

Now the law of God does not require or permit us to love our neighbor with this degree of love, for that would be idolatry. But the command, "to love our neighbor as ourselves," implies

- (a) That we should love ourselves less than supremely, and attach no more importance to our own interests and happiness than their relative value demands-- so that the first thing implied in this command is that we love ourselves less than supremely, and that we love our neighbor with the same degree of love which it is lawful for us to exercise towards ourselves.
- (b) Equal love does not imply that we should neglect our own appropriate concerns, and attend to the affairs of others. God has appointed to every man a particular sphere in which to act, and particular affairs to which he must attend. And this business, whatever it is, must be transacted for God and not for ourselves. For a man, therefore, to neglect his particular calling under the pretence of attending to the business of others, is neither required or permitted by this law.

Nor are we to neglect our own families, and the nurture and education of our children, and attend to that of others. "But if any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." To these duties we are to attend for God. And no man or woman is required or permitted to neglect the children God has given them, under the pretence of attending to the families of others.

Nor does this law require or permit us to squander our possessions upon the

intemperate, and dissolute, and improvident. Not that the absolute necessities of such persons are in no case to be relieved by us, but it is always to be done in such a manner as not to encourage, but to rebuke their evil courses.

Nor does this law require or permit us to suffer others to live by sponging out of our possessions, while they themselves are not engaged in promoting the good of men.

Nor does it require or permit us to lend money to speculators, or for speculating purposes, or in any way to encourage selfishness.

- (c) But by equal love is meant, as I have said, the same love in kind and degree, which it is lawful for us to exercise towards ourselves. It is lawful, nay, it is our duty to exercise a suitable regard to our own happiness. This is benevolence to self, or what is commonly called self-love. The same, both in kind and degree, we are required to exercise to all our fellow men.
- (5.) Another feature of holy love is that it must be impartial; i.e. it must extend to enemies as well as friends. Else it is selfish love, and comes under the reprobation of the Savior, in the passage before quoted, Luke 6:32-34: "For if ye love them who love you what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same," &c.

Now observe that this test must always be applied to the kind of love we exercise to our fellow men, in order to understand its genuineness-- God's love is love to enemies. It was for his enemies that he gave his Son. Our love must be the same in kind-- it must extend to enemies, as well as friends. And if it does not, it is partial and selfish.

- 2. Entire Sanctification implies, entire conformity of heart and life to all the known will of God however it may be made known-- to both physical and moral law so far as they are known.
- 3. It implies such a perfect confidence in him as to be willing that all events should be at his sovereign disposal-- such a confidence as to preclude all carefulness and undue anxiety about ourselves or our friends, our temporal or eternal interests, the interests of the Church or of the world. Let me be understood. I am as far as possible from supposing a state of entire Sanctification is inconsistent with the greatest desire, and most earnest and prevailing wrestlings with God for blessings, both spiritual and temporal upon ourselves and the world. But I suppose that a soul in a state of entire conformity to the will of God, will never so distrust his providence and grace as to be thrown into a state of feverish anxiety about any event. It will, on all occasions, most sweetly acquiesce and rejoice in the will of God, in whatever way that will is revealed.
- 4. Entire Sanctification implies a supreme disposition to glorify and serve God-- that this is the ruling principle of our life-- that we live for no lower or other end than this-- that all other things that we desire are esteemed as a means to this end-- that life and health, and food and raiment, and houses and furniture, and every thing else that we possess are regarded by us as a means to this one great absorbing end, the Glory of God.

- 5. It implies that the principle of love should have such energy as to control every design and action directly or indirectly.
- 6. It implies an abiding sense of the presence of God. From what I have already said, you will understand me of course not to mean that God is the direct object of thought, attention and affection, but that there should be such a sense of his presence at all times as to have an important bearing upon our whole lives. Every one knows by his own experience, what it is to have a kind of sense of the presence of a person, who is not at the time the direct object of our thoughts. A man in the presence of an earthly prince, or of an august court, under the eye of a human judge, would be continually awed, and restrained, and affected with a kind of sense of where he was, and in whose presence, and under whose eye he was acting although his mind might be so intensely employed in the transaction of business as not at all to make the judge or prince the object of direct thought, attention, or affection. In this sense, I suppose a sanctified soul will have an abiding sense, at all times and places, of the presence of God. And when the mind is withdrawn from necessary pursuits, it will naturally return to God, and be sensible of His presence in a vastly higher sense than this. It will be so impressed, and melted, and affected, by His presence as can never be expressed in words, but as a matter of experience is familiar to all those who walk with God.
- 7. It does imply deep and uninterrupted communion with God. But here let me correct a mistake into which, as I think, some have fallen. Many seem to recognize nothing as communion with God expect that sweet peace and joy, and flowing, and glowing love that the soul often experiences in seasons of communion. But God no doubt often has seasons of intercourse and communion with the soul and with the sanctified soul, in which he reminds it of past sins and follies. And in order to keep it in a sanctified state he gives it such a view or its past history as to fill it with unutterable shame, and self-abhorrence, and contempt. Now persons are apt to conceive of this state of mind as a state of darkness, & to conceive of themselves as being under the hidings of God's countenance, when in fact they are never perhaps more thoroughly in the light than at such seasons. They are never perhaps nearer to God than on such occasions. To be sure their thoughts are not occupied with those sweet and heavenly visions that fill the mind with joy. Yet they are occupied with considerations of no less importance and no less indispensable to continuing them in a state of holiness, than those sweet truths which at other times so greatly rejoice them.
- 8. It implies a greater dread of offending God than of any other evil. This is implied in supreme love. It is a contradiction to say that we love God supremely, and yet do not dread offending Him so much as we dread some other evil. If we love Him more than any earthly friend, we shall dread to offend Him more than that friend. If we love Him more than we do ourselves, we should dread offending Him more than we do that evil should befall ourselves. If he is dearer to us than our own souls we should dread remaining in sin more than we should dread the loss of our souls.
- 9. It does imply the subjugation of all our appetites and passions to the will of God. I have already said that the sin of Adam consisted in preferring the gratification of his appetites to the

will of God. This is the sin of all men. This is the substance and the history of selfishness. Now entire obedience to the law of God does imply that no appetite or susceptibility of body or mind shall be gratified in opposition to the known will of God. But on the other hand, that "the whole body, soul and spirit" shall be held in a state of entire consecration to God.

- 10. It implies the strictest employment of our time in the acquisition of knowledge, and a consecration of what we already know to the service of God.

In my last lecture, I said that the legal maxim, "Ignorance of the law excuses no one," is true in morals to but a limited extent, and that actual knowledge is indispensable to obligation under the government of God. This I think was sufficiently proven by a reference to scripture testimony. I also said that in sins of ignorance, the sin consisted in the ignorance itself, and not in the non-performance of that of which the mind has no knowledge.

Now to avoid mistake, it is important to remark here that ignorance of our duty is always a sin where we possess the means and opportunities of information. In such cases, the guilt of the ignorance is equal to all the default of which it is the occasion. Strictly speaking the duty to do a thing does not and cannot attach until the mind has a knowledge of that thing. Yet if the means of knowledge are within reach of the mind, the guilt is just as great as all the default of which this ignorance is the occasion. So that courts of law do not inflict injustice in holding all the subjects of a government responsible for knowing the law, where the means of knowledge are within their reach. Although they are not in form pronounced guilty for their ignorance, & punished for the specific offence, but on the contrary are held responsible for breaches of those laws of which they had no knowledge, yet in fact no injustice is done them, as their ignorance in such cases really deserves the punishment inflicted.

To this it may be objected that God, under the old dispensation treated sins of ignorance as involving less guilt than sins committed against knowledge. To this I reply,

He did so. And the reason is very obvious. The people possessed but very limited means of information. Copies of the law were very scarce and utterly inaccessible to the great mass of the people. So that while He held them sufficiently responsible to engage their memories to retain a knowledge of their duty and to search it out with all diligence, yet it is plain that He held them responsible in a vastly lower sense than He does those who have higher means of information. The responsibility of the heathen was less than that of the Jews-- that of the Jews less than that of Christians-- and that of Christians in the early ages of the Church, before the canon of scripture was full and copies multiplied, much less than that of Christians at the present day.

- 11. It implies the complete annihilation of selfishness under all its forms, and a practical and hearty recognition of the rights and interests of our neighbor. Let me point out in a few particulars what the law of God prohibits and what it requires in these particulars, as stated in a former lecture.

- (1.) It prohibits all supreme self-love, or selfishness. The command, "love thy neighbor as thyself," implies, not that we should love our neighbor supremely, as selfish men love themselves; but that we should love ourselves, in the first place, and pursue our happiness, only according to its real value, in the scale of being. But I need not dwell upon this; as it will not probably be doubted, that this precept prohibits supreme self-love.
- (2.) It prohibits all excessive self-love: (i.e.) every degree of love, that is disproportioned to the relative value of our own happiness.
- (3.) It prohibits the laying any practical stress upon any interest, because it is our own.
- (4.) It prohibits, of course, every degree of ill will, and all those feelings that are necessarily connected with selfishness.
- (5.) It prohibits apathy and indifference, with regard to the well being of our fellow men. But;
- (6.) It requires the practical recognition of the fact, that all men are brethren-- that God is the great Parent-- the great Father of the universe-- that all moral agents, every where , are his children-- and that he is interested in the happiness of every individual, according to its relative importance. He is no respecter of persons. But so far as the love of Benevolence is concerned, He loves all moral beings, in proportion to their capacity of receiving, and doing good. Now the law of God evidently takes all this for granted; and that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth."
- (7.) It requires that every being, and interest should be regarded and treated, by us, according to their relative value; (i.e.) that we should recognize God's relation to the universe-- and our relation to each other-- and treat all men as our brethren-- as having an inalienable title to our good will, and kind offices-- as citizens of the same government-- and members of the great family of God.
- (8.) It requires us to exercise as tender a regard to our neighbor's reputation, interest, and well-being, in all respects, as to our own-- to be as unwilling to mention his faults, as to have our own mentioned-- to hear him slandered as to be slandered ourselves. In short, he is to be esteemed, by us, as our brother.
- (9.) It justly reprobates any violation of the great principle of equal love, as rebellion against the whole universe. It is rebellion against God, because it is a rejection of his authority-- and selfishness, under any form, is a setting up of our own interests, in opposition to the interests of the universe of God.
- 12. Entire Sanctification implies a willingness to exercise self-denial, even unto death, for the glory of God and good of man, did they require it. The Apostle teaches us that "we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren," as Christ laid down his life.

LECTURE III.

January 29, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 3

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

We have now arrived at a very important point in the discussion of this subject, and I beg your patient attention. Having shown,

- 1. What I mean by the term sanctification;*
- 2. What entire sanctification is;*
- 3. The difference between entire and permanent sanctification;*
- 4. What is not implied, and*
- 5. What is implied in entire sanctification;*

I am next, according to my plan to show,

VI. That entire sanctification is attainable in this life.

- 1. It is self-evident that entire obedience to God's law is possible on the ground of natural ability. To deny this is to deny that a man is able to do as well as he can. The very language of the law is such as to level its claims to the capacity of the subject, however great or small that capacity may be. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Here then it is plain, that all the law demands, is the exercise of whatever strength we have, in the service of God. Now, as entire sanctification consists in perfect obedience to the law of God, and as the law requires nothing more than the right use of whatever strength we have, it is of course, forever settled that a state of entire and permanent sanctification is attainable in this life on the ground of natural ability.
- 2. The provisions of grace are such as to render its actual attainment in this life, the object of reasonable pursuit. It is admitted that the entire and permanent sanctification of the church is to be accomplished. It is also admitted that this work is to be accomplished "through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." It is also universally agreed that this work must be begun here; and also that it must be completed before the soul can enter heaven. This

then is the inquiry, Is this state attainable as a matter of fact before death; and if so when, in this life, may we expect to attain it? It is easy to see that this question can be settled only by a reference to the word of God. And here it is of fundamental importance that we understand the rules by which scripture declarations and promises are to be interpreted. I have already given several rules in the light of which we have endeavored to interpret the meaning of the law. I will now state several plain common sense rules by which the promises are to be interpreted. The question in regard to the rules of biblical interpretation is fundamental to all religious inquiry. Until the church are agreed to interpret the scriptures in accordance with certain fixed and undeniable principles, they can never be agreed in regard to what the Bible teaches. I have often been amazed at the total disregard of all sober rules of biblical interpretation. On the one hand the threatenings, and on the other the promises, are either thrown away or made to mean something entirely different from that which was intended by the Spirit of God. I have much to say on this subject, and design, the Lord willing, to make the rules of biblical interpretation the subject of distinct inquiry at another time. At present, I will only mention a few plain, common sense, and self-evident rules for the interpretation of the promises. In the light of these, we may be able to settle the inquiry before us, viz: whether the provisions of grace are such as to render entire and permanent sanctification, in this life, an object of reasonable pursuit.

- (1.) The language of a promise is to be interpreted by a reference to the known character of him who promises, where this character is revealed and made known in other ways than by the promise itself, e.g.
 - (a) If the promisor is known to be of a very bountiful disposition, or the opposite of this, these considerations should be taken into the account in interpreting the language of his promise. If he is of a very bountiful disposition, he may be expected to mean all that he seems to mean in the language of his promise, and a very liberal construction should be put upon his language. But if his character is known to be the opposite of bountifulness, and that whatever he promised would be given with great reluctance, his language should be construed strictly.
 - (b) His character for hyperbole and extravagance in the use of language should be taken into the account in interpreting the promises. If it be well understood that the promisor is in the habit of using extravagant language--to say much more than he means, this circumstance should in all justice be taken into the account in the interpretation of the language of his promises. But on the other hand, if he be known to be an individual of great candor, and to use language with great circumspection and propriety, we may freely understand him to mean what he says. His promise may be in figurative language and not to be understood literally, but in this case even, he must be understood to mean what the figure naturally and fully implies.
 - (c) The fact should be taken into the account, whether the promise was made deliberately or in circumstances of great but temporary excitement. If the promise was made deliberately, it should be interpreted to mean what it says. But if it were made under great but temporary excitement, much allowance is to be made for the

state of mind, which led to the use of such strong language.

- (2.) The relation of the parties to each other should be duly considered in the interpretation of the language of a promise; e.g. the promise of a father to a son admits of a more liberal and full construction than if the promise were made to a stranger, as the father may be supposed to indulge a more liberal and bountiful disposition towards a son than towards a person in whom he has no particular interest.
- (3.) The design of the promisor in relation to the necessities of the promisee or person to whom the promise is made, should be taken into the account. If it be manifest that the design of the promisor was to meet the necessities of the promisee, then his promise must be so understood as to meet these necessities.
- (4.) If it be manifest that the design of the promisor was to meet the necessities of the promisee, then the extent of these necessities should be taken into the account in the interpretation of the promise.
- (5.) The interest of the promisor in the accomplishment of his design, or in fully meeting and relieving the necessities of the promisee, should be taken into the account. If there is the most satisfactory proof aside from that which is contained in the promise itself, that the promisor feels the highest interest in the promisee, and in fully meeting and relieving his necessities, then his promise must be understood accordingly.
- (6.) If it is known that the promisor has exercised the greatest self-denial and made the greatest sacrifice for the promisee, in order to render it proper or possible for him to make and fulfill his promises, in relation to the relieving his necessities, the state of mind implied in this conduct, should be fully recognized in interpreting the language of the promise. It would be utterly unreasonable and absurd in such a case to restrict and pare down the language of his promise so as to make it fall entirely short of what might reasonably be expected of the promisor, from those developments of his character, feelings, and designs, which were made by the great self-denial he has exercised and the sacrifices he has made.
- (7.) The bearing of the promise upon the interests of the promisor should also be taken into the account. It is a general and correct rule of interpretation, that when the thing promised has an injurious bearing upon the interest of the promisor and is something which he cannot well afford to do, and might therefore be supposed to promise with reluctance, the language in such a case is to be strictly construed. No more is to be understood by it than the strictest construction will demand.
- (8.) But if on the other hand the thing promised will not impoverish or in any way be inimical to the interests of the promisor, no such construction is to be resorted to.
- (9.) Where the thing promised is that which the promisor has the greatest delight in doing or bestowing; and where he accounts it "more blessed to give than to receive;" and where

it is well known by other revelations of his character, and by his own express and often repeated declarations, that he has the highest satisfaction and finds his own happiness in bestowing favors upon the promisee, in this case the most liberal construction should be put upon the promise, and he is to be understood to mean all that he says.

- (10.) The resources and ability of the promisor to meet the necessities of the promisee, without injury to himself, are to be considered. If a physician should promise to restore a patient to perfect health, it might be unfair to understand him as meaning all that he says. If he so far restored the patient as that he recovered in a great measure from his disease, it might be reasonable to suppose that this was all he really intended, as the known inability of a physician to restore an individual to perfect health might reasonably modify our understanding of the language of his promise. But when there can be no doubt as to the ability, resources, and willingness of the physician to restore his patient to perfect health, then we are, in all reason and justice, required to believe he means all that he says. If God should promise to restore a man to perfect health who was diseased, there can be no doubt that his promise should be understood to mean what its language imports.
- (11.) When commands and promises are given by one person to another, in the same language, in both cases it is to be understood alike, unless there is some manifest reason to the contrary.
- (12.) If neither the language, connection, nor circumstances, demand a diverse interpretation, we are bound to understand the same language alike in both cases.
- (13.) I have said, we are to interpret the language of law so as to consist with natural justice. I now say, that we are to interpret the language of the promises so as to consist with the known greatness, resources, goodness, bountifulness, relations, design, happiness, and glory of the promisor.
- (14.) If his bountifulness is equal to his justice, his promises of grace must be understood to mean as much as the requirements of his justice.
- (15.) If he delights in giving as much as in receiving, his promises must mean as much as the language of his requirements.
- (16.) If he is as merciful as he is just, his promises of mercy must be as liberally construed as the requirements of his justice.
- (17.) If "he delighteth in mercy," if Himself says "judgment is his strange work," and mercy is that in which he has peculiar satisfaction, his promises of grace and mercy are to be construed even more liberally than the command and threatenings of his justice. The language in this case is to be understood as meaning quite as much as the same language would in any supposable circumstances.
- (18.) Another rule of interpreting and applying the promises which has been extensively

overlooked is this, the promises are all "yes and amen in Christ Jesus." They are all founded upon and expressive of great and immutable principles of God's government. God is no respecter of persons. He knows nothing of favoritism. But when He makes a promise, He reveals a principle of universal application to all persons in like circumstances. Therefore the promises are not restricted in their application to the individual or individuals to whom they were first given, but may be claimed by all persons in similar circumstances. And what God is at one time, He always is. What He has promised at one time or to one person, he promises at all times to all persons under similar circumstances. That this is a correct view of the subject is manifest from the manner in which the New Testament writers understood and applied the promises of the Old Testament. Let any person with a reference Bible read the New Testament with a design to understand how its writers applied the promises of the Old Testament, and he will see this principle brought out in all its fulness. The promises made to Adam, Noah, Abraham, the Patriarchs, and to the inspired men of every age, together with the promises made to the church, and indeed all the promises of spiritual blessings,--it is true of them all, that what God has said and promised once, He always says and promises, to all persons and at all times, and in all places, where the circumstances are similar.

Having stated these rules, in the light of which we are to interpret the language of the promises, I will say a few words in regard to when a promise becomes due, and on what conditions we may realize its fulfillment. I have said some of the same things in the last volume of the Evangelist. But I wish to repeat them in this connection, and add something more.

- (1.) All the promises of sanctification in the Bible, from their very nature necessarily imply the exercise of our own agency in receiving the thing promised. As sanctification consists in the right exercise of our own agency, or in obedience to the law of God, a promise of sanctification must necessarily be conditioned upon the exercise of faith in the promise. And its fulfillment implies the exercise of our own powers in receiving it.
- (2.) It consequently follows, that a promise of sanctification, to be of any avail to us, must be due at some certain time, expressed or implied in the promise: for if the fulfillment of the promise implies the exercise of our own agency, the promise is a mere nullity to us, unless we are able to understand when it becomes due, or at what time we are to expect and plead its fulfillment.
- (3.) A promise in the present tense is on demand. In other words, it is always due, and its fulfillment may be plead and claimed by the promisee at any time.
- (4.) A promise due at a future specified time, is after that time on demand, and may at any time thereafter be plead as a promise in the present tense.
- (5.) A great many of the Old Testament promises became due at the advent of Christ. Since that time they are to be considered and used as promises in the present tense. The Old Testament saints could not plead their fulfillment to them; because they were either expressly or impliedly informed, that they were not to be fulfilled until the coming of Christ. All that class of promises, therefore, that became due "in the last days," "at the

end of the world," i.e. the Jewish dispensation, are to be regarded as now due or as promises in the present tense.

- (6.) Notwithstanding these promises are now due, yet they are expressly or impliedly conditioned upon the exercise of faith, and the right use of the appropriate means by us, to receive their fulfillment.
- (7.) When a promise is due, we may expect the fulfillment of it at once or gradually, according to the nature of the blessing. The promise that the world shall be converted in the latter day, does not imply that we are to expect the world to be converted at any one moment of time; but that the Lord will commence it at once, and hasten it in its time, according to the faith and efforts of the church. On the other hand, when the blessing promised may in its nature be fulfilled at once, and when the nature of the case makes it necessary that it should be, then its fulfillment may be expected whenever we exercise faith.
- (8.) There is a plain distinction between promises of grace and of glory. Promises of glory are of course not to be fulfilled until we arrive at heaven. Promises of grace, unless there be some express or implied reason to the contrary, are to be understood as applicable to this life.
- (9.) A promise also may be unconditional in one sense, and conditional in another; e.g. promises made to the church as a body may be absolute and their fulfillment be secure and certain, sooner or later, while their fulfillment to any generation of the church or to any particular individuals of the church, may be and must be conditioned upon their faith and the appropriate use of means. Thus the promise of God that the church should possess the land of Canaan was absolute and unconditional in such a sense as that the church, at some period, would and certainly must take possession of that land. But the promise was conditional in the sense that the entering into possession, by any generation, depended entirely upon their own faith and the appropriate use of means. So the promise of the world's conversion, and the sanctification of the church under the reign of Christ, is unconditional in the sense, that it is certain that those events will at some time occur, but when they will occur--what generation of individuals shall receive this blessing, is necessarily conditioned upon their faith. This principle is plainly recognized by Paul in Heb. 4:6, 11: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief;" "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

I come now to consider the question directly, and wholly as a Bible question, whether entire and permanent sanctification is in such a sense attainable in this life as to make its attainment an object of rational pursuit.

Let me first, however, recall your attention to what this blessing is. Simple obedience to the law of God is what I understand to be present, and its continuance to be permanent sanctification. The law is and forever must be the only standard. Whatever departs from this law on either side, must be false. Whatever requires more or less than the law of God, I reject as having nothing to do with the

question.

It will not be my design to examine a great number of scripture promises, but rather to show that those which I do examine, fully sustain the position I have taken. One is sufficient, if it be full and its application just, to settle this question forever. I might occupy many lectures in the examination of the promises, for they are exceedingly numerous, and full, and in point. But as I have already given several lectures on the promises, my design is now to examine only a few of them, more critically than I did before. This will enable you to apply the same principles to the examination of the scripture promises generally.

- 1. I begin by referring you to the law of God, as given in Deut. 10:12: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (1.) It professedly sums up the whole duty of man to God--to fear and love Him with all the heart, and all the soul.
 - (2.) Although this is said of Israel, yet it is equally true of all men. It is equally binding upon all, and is all that God requires of any man in regard to Himself.
 - (3.) Obedience to this requirement is entire sanctification.

See Deut. 30:6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Here we have a promise couched in the same language as the command just quoted. Upon this passage I remark:

- (1.) It promises just what the law requires. It promises all that the first and great commandment any where requires.
- (2.) Obedience to the first commandment always implies obedience to the second. It is plainly impossible that we should "love God, whom we have not seen," and "not love our neighbor whom we have seen."
- (3.) This promise, on its very face, appears to mean just what the law means--to promise just what the law requires.
- (4.) If the law requires a state of entire sanctification, or if that which the law requires is a state of entire sanctification, then this is a promise of entire sanctification.
- (5.) As the command is universally binding upon all and applicable to all, so this promise is universally applicable to all who will lay hold upon it.
- (6.) Faith is an indispensable condition to the fulfillment of this promise. It is entirely impossible that we should love God with all the heart, without confidence in Him. God

begets love in man, in no other way, than by so revealing Himself as to inspire confidence,--that confidence which works by love. In Rules 10 and 11, for the interpretation of the promises, it is said, that "where a command and a promise are given in the same language, we are bound to interpret the language alike in both cases, unless there be some manifest reason for a different interpretation." Now here, there is no perceivable reason why we should not understand the language of the promise as meaning as much as the language of the command. This promise appears to have been designed to cover the whole ground of the requirement.

- (7.) Suppose the language in this promise to be used in a command, or suppose that the form of this promise were changed into that of a command. Suppose God should say as He does elsewhere, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul;" who would doubt that God designed to require a state of entire sanctification or consecration to Himself. How then are we to understand it when used in the form of a promise? See Rules 14 and 15 "If his bountifulness equal his justice, his promises of grace must be understood to mean as much as the requirements of his justice." "If He delights in giving as much as in receiving, his promises must mean as much as the language of his requirements."
 - (8.) This promise is designed to be fulfilled in this life. The language and connection imply this: I "will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul."
 - (9.) This promise as it respects the church, at some day, must be absolute and certain. So that God will undoubtedly, at some period, beget this state of mind in the church. But to what particular individuals and generation this promise will be fulfilled must depend upon their faith in the promise.
- 2. See Jer. 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord;) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Upon this passage, I remark:
 - (1.) It was to become due, or the time its fulfillment may be claimed and expected, was at the advent of Christ. This is unequivocally settled in Heb. 8:8-12, where this promise is quoted at length as being applicable to the gospel day.
 - (2.) This is undeniably a promise of entire sanctification. It is a promise that the "law shall be written in the heart." It means that the very temper and spirit required by the law

shall be begotten in the soul. Now if the law requires entire sanctification or perfect holiness, this is certainly a promise of it; for it is a promise of all that the law requires. To say that this is not a promise of entire sanctification, is the same absurdity as to say, that perfect obedience to the law is not entire sanctification; and this last is the same absurdity as to say that something more is our duty than what the law requires; and this again is to say that the law is imperfect and unjust.

- (3.) A permanent state of sanctification is plainly implied in this promise.
 - (a) The reason for setting aside the first covenant was, that it was broken: "Which my covenant they brake." One grand design of the New Covenant is, that it shall not be broken, for then it will be no better than the first.
 - (b) Permanency is implied in the fact, that it is to be engraven in the heart.
 - (c) Permanency is plainly implied in the assertion, that God will remember their sin no more. In Jer. 32:39, 40, where the same promise is in substance repeated, you will find it expressly stated that the covenant is to be "everlasting;" and that He will so "put his fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Him." Here permanency is as expressly promised as it can be.
 - (d) Suppose the language of this promise to be thrown into the form of a command. Suppose God to say, "Let my law be within your hearts, and let it be in your inward parts, and let my fear be so within your hearts that you shall not depart from me. Let your covenant with me be everlasting." If this language were found in a command, would any man in his senses doubt that it meant perfect and permanent sanctification? If not, by what rule of sober interpretation does he make it mean any thing else when found in a promise? It appears to be the most profane trifling, when such language is found in a promise, to make it mean less than it does when found in a command. See Rule 17.
- (4.) This promise as it respects the Church, at some period of its history, is unconditional, and its fulfillment certain. But in respect to any particular individuals or generation of the church, its fulfillment is necessarily conditioned upon their faith.
- (5.) The church, as a body, have certainly never received this new covenant. Yet doubtless multitudes, in every age of the Christian dispensation, have received it. And God will hasten the time when it shall be so fully accomplished, that there shall be no need for one man to say to his brother, "Know ye the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest."
- (6.) It should be understood that this promise was made to the Christian church and not all to the Jewish church. The saints, under the old dispensation, had no reason to expect the fulfillment of this and kindred promises to themselves, because their fulfillment was expressly deferred until the commencement of the Christian dispensation.

- (7.) It has been said, that nothing more is promised than regeneration. But were not the Old Testament saints regenerated? Yet it is expressly said that they received not the promises. Heb. 11:13, 39, 40: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Here we see that these promises were not received by the Old Testament saints. Yet they were regenerated.
- (8.) It has also been said that the promise implied no more than the final perseverance of the saints. But I would inquire, did not the Old Testament saints persevere? And yet we have just seen, that the Old Testament saints did not receive these promises in their fulfillment.
- 3. I will next examine the promise in Ezek. 36:25-27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Upon this I remark:
 - (1.) It was written within nineteen years after that which we have just examined in Jer. It plainly refers to the same time and is a promise of the same blessing.
 - (2.) It seems to be admitted, nor can it be denied, that this is a promise of entire sanctification. The language is very definite and full. "Then," referring to some future time when it should become due, "will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." Mark the first promise is, "ye shall be clean." If to be "clean" does not mean entire sanctification, what does it mean?

The second promise is, "from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." If to be cleansed "from all filthiness and all idols," be not a state of entire sanctification, what is?

The third promise is, "a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh." If to have a "clean heart," a "new heart," a "heart of flesh," in opposition to a "heart of stone,"--be not entire sanctification, what is?

The fourth promise is, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments to do them."
 - (3.) Let us turn the language of these promises into that of command; and understand God as saying, "Make you a clean heart, a new heart, and a new spirit; put away all your

iniquities, all your filthiness, and all your idols; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them." Now what man in the sober exercise of his senses, would doubt whether God meant to require a state of entire sanctification in such promises as these? The rules of legal interpretation, would demand that we should so understand Him. Rule 5: "The interest of the promisor in the accomplishment of His design or in fully meeting and relieving the necessities of the promisee, should also be taken into the account. If there is the most satisfactory proof, aside from that which is contained in the promise itself, that the promisor feels the highest interest in the promisee, and in fully meeting and relieving his necessities, then his promise must be understood accordingly."

If this is so, what is the fair and proper construction of this language when found in a promise. I do not hesitate to say that to me it is amazing that any doubt should be left on the mind of any man whether, in these promises, God means as much as in his commands couched in the same language; e.g. Ezek. 18:30, 31: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" Now that the language in the promise under consideration, should mean as much as the language of this command, is demanded by every sober rule of interpretation. And who ever dreamed, that when He required His people to put away all their iniquities, He only meant that they should put away a part of their iniquities?

- (4.) This promise respects the church, and it cannot be pretended that it has ever been fulfilled according to its proper import, in any past age of the church.
 - (5.) As it regards the church, at a future period of its history, this promise is absolute, in the sense that it certainly will be fulfilled.
 - (6.) It was manifestly designed to apply to Christians under the new dispensation, rather than to the Jews under the old dispensation. The sprinkling of clean water and the outpouring of the Spirit, seem plainly to indicate that the promise belonged more particularly to the Christian dispensation. It undeniably belongs to the same class of promises with that in Jer. 31:31-34, Joel 2:28, and many others, that manifestly look forward to the gospel day as the time when they shall become due. As these promises have never been fulfilled, in their extent and meaning, their complete fulfillment remains to be realized by the church as a body. And those individuals and that generation will take possession of the blessing, who understand and believe and appropriate them to their own case.
- 4. I will next examine the promise in the text, 1 Thess. 5:23, 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Upon this I remark:
 - (1.) That according to Prof. Robinson's Lexicon, the language used here is the strongest form of expressing perfect or entire sanctification.

- (2.) It is admitted, that this is a prayer for and a promise of entire sanctification.
- (3.) The very language shows, that both the prayer and the promise refer to this life, as it is a prayer for the sanctification of the body as well as the soul; also that they might be preserved, not after, but unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (4.) This is a prayer of inspiration, to which is annexed an express promise that God will do it.
- (5.) It is, from the necessity of the case, conditioned upon our faith, as sanctification without faith is naturally impossible.
- (6.) Now if this promise, with those that have already been examined, do not honestly, and fully, settle the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, it is difficult to understand how any thing can be settled by appeal to scripture.

There are great multitudes of promises to the same import, to which I might refer you, and which if examined in the light of the foregoing rules of interpretation, would be seen to heap up demonstration upon demonstration, that this is a doctrine of the Bible. Only examine them in the light of these plain, self evident principles, and it seems to me, that they cannot fail to produce conviction.

I will not longer occupy your time in the examination of the promises, but in my next will mention several other considerations in support of this doctrine.

LECTURE IV.

February 12, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 4

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

Having examined a few of the promises in proof of the position, that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life, I will now proceed to mention other considerations in support of this doctrine.

- 5. Christ prayed for the entire sanctification of saints in this life. "I pray not," He says, "that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil of the world." He did not pray that they should be kept from persecution or from natural death, but He manifestly prayed, that they should be kept from sin. Suppose Christ had commanded them

to keep themselves from the evil of the world; what should we understand him to mean by such a command?

- 6. Christ has taught us to pray for entire sanctification in this life; "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Now, if there is entire sanctification in heaven, Christ requires us to pray for it on earth. And is it probable that He has taught us to pray for that which He knows never can be or will be granted?
- 7. The Apostles evidently expected Christians to attain this state in this life.--See Col. 4:12: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (1.) It was the object of the efforts of Epaphras, and a thing which he expected to effect, to be instrumental in causing those Christians to be "perfect and complete in all the will of God."
 - (2.) If this language does not describe a state of entire sanctification, I know of none that would. If "to be perfect and complete in all the will of God," be not Christian perfection, what is?
 - (3.) Paul knew that Epaphras was laboring to this end, and with this expectation; and he informed the church of it in a manner that evidently showed his approbation of the views and conduct of Epaphras.
- 8. That the Apostles expected Christians to attain this state is further manifest, from 2 Cor. 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God."

Now does not the Apostle speak in this passage as if he really expected those to whom he wrote "to perfect holiness in the fear of God?" Observe how strong and full the language is, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." If "to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and all filthiness of the spirit, and to perfect holiness," be not entire sanctification, what is? That he expected this to take place in this life, is evident from the fact, that he requires them to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh as well as of the spirit.

- 9. All the intermediate steps can be taken. Therefore, the end can be reached. There is certainly no point in our progress towards entire sanctification, where it can be said, we can go no further. To this it has been objected, that though all the intermediate steps can be taken, yet the goal can never be reached in this life, just as five may be divided by three, ad infinitum, without exhausting the fraction. Now this illustration deceives the mind that uses it, as it may the minds of those who listen to it. It is true that you can never exhaust the fraction in dividing five by three, for the plain reason that the division may be carried on, ad infinitum. But in the case of entire sanctification, all the intermediate steps can be taken; for there is an end, or state of entire sanctification; and that too, at a point infinitely short of infinite.

- 10. That this state may be attained in this life, I argue from the fact that provision is made against all the occasions of sin. Men sin only when they are tempted. And it is expressly asserted that in every temptation provision is made for our escape. Certainly if it is possible for us to escape without sin, under every temptation, then a state of entire and permanent sanctification is attainable.
- 11. Full provision is made for overcoming the three great enemies of our souls; the world, the flesh, and the devil.
 - (1.) The world--"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ."
 - (2.) The flesh--"If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."
 - (3.) Satan--"The shield of faith shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "And God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Now all sober rules of Biblical criticism require us to understand the passages I have quoted, in the sense I have quoted them.

- 12. It is evident from the fact, expressly stated, that abundant means are provided for the accomplishment of this end. Eph. 4:10-16: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, where by they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." Upon this passage, I remark:
 - (1.) That what is here spoken of is plainly applicable only to this life. It is in this life that the apostles, evangelists, prophets and teachers exercise their ministry. The means, therefore, are applicable, and so far as we know, only applicable to this life.
 - (2.) The Apostle here manifestly teaches that these means are designed, and adequate to perfecting the whole Church as the body of Christ, "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Now observe--
 - (a.) These means are for the perfecting of the saints, till the whole Church, as a perfect man, "has come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If

this is not entire sanctification, what is? That this is to take place in this world, is evident from what follows. For the Apostle adds, "that we henceforth," (i.e. after arriving at this perfection,) "be no more tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

- (3.) It should be observed that this is a very strong passage in support of the doctrine, inasmuch as it asserts that abundant means are provided for the sanctification of the Church in this life. And as the whole includes all its parts, there must be sufficient provision for the sanctification of each individual.
- (4.) If the work is ever to be effected, it is by these means. But these means are used only in this life. Entire sanctification then must take place in this life.
- (5.) If this passage does not teach a state of entire sanctification, such a state is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. And if believers are not here said to be wholly sanctified by these means, and of course in this life, I know not that it is anywhere taught that they shall be sanctified at all.
- (6.) But suppose this passage to be put in the language of a command, how should we understand it? Suppose the saints commanded to be perfect, and to "grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," could any thing less than entire sanctification be understood by such requisitions? Then by what rule of sober criticism, I would inquire, can this language used in this connection, mean any thing less than I have supposed it to mean?
- 13. God is able to perform this work in and for us. Eph. 3:14-19: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (1.) Paul evidently prays here for the entire sanctification of believers in this life. It is implied in our being "rooted and grounded in love," and being "filled with all the fulness of God," to be as perfect in our measure and according to our capacity, as He is. If to be filled with the fulness of God, does not imply a state of entire sanctification, what does?
 - (2.) That Paul did not see any difficulty in the way of God's accomplishing this work, is manifest from what he says in the 20th verse--"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, &c."
- 14. The Bible nowhere represents death as the termination of sin in the saints, which it could

not fail to do, were it true that they cease not to sin until death. It has been the custom of the Church, for a long time, to console individuals, in view of death, by the consideration, that it would be the termination of all their sin. And how almost universal has been the custom in consoling the friends of deceased saints, to mention this as a most important fact, that now they had ceased from sin. Now if death is the termination of sin in the saints, and if they never cease to sin until they pass into eternity, too much stress never has been or can be laid upon that circumstance; and it seems utterly incredible that no inspired writer should ever have noticed the fact. The representations of scripture are all right over against this idea. It is said, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works to follow them." Here it is not intimated that they rest from their sins, but from their good works in this life; such works as shall follow, not to curse but to bless them. The representations of scripture are that death is the termination of the saint's suffering and labors of love, for the good of men and the glory of God, in this world. But no where in the Bible is it intimated that the death of a saint is the termination of his serving the devil.

But if it be true that Christians continue to sin till they die, and death is the termination, and the only termination of their sin, it seems to me impossible that the scripture representations on the subject should be what they are.

- 15. The Bible representations of death are utterly inconsistent with its being an indispensable means of sanctification. Death is represented as an enemy in the Bible. But if death is the only condition upon which men are brought into a state of entire sanctification, his agency is as important and as indispensable as the influence of the Holy Ghost. When death is represented in the Bible as any thing else than an enemy, it is because he cuts short the sufferings of the saints, and introduces them into a state of eternal glory--not because he breaks them off from communion with the devil! How striking is the contrast between the language of the Church and that of inspiration on this subject! The Church is consoling the Christian in view of death, that it will be the termination of his sins,--that he will then cease to serve the devil and his own lusts. The language of inspiration, on the other hand, is that he will cease, not from wicked but from good works, and labors, and sufferings for God in this world. The language of the Church is that then he will enter upon a life of unalterable holiness--that then, and not till then, he shall be entirely sanctified. The language of inspiration is, that because he is sanctified, death shall be an entrance into a state of eternal glory.
- 16. Ministers are certainly bound to set up some definite standard, to which as the ministers of God, they are bound to insist upon complete conformity. And now I would ask, what other standard can they and dare they set up than this? To insist upon any thing less than this, is to turn Pope and grant an indulgence to sin. But to set up this standard, and then inculcate that conformity to it is not, as a matter of fact, attainable in this life, is as absolutely to take the part of sin against God, as it would be to insist upon repentance in theory, and then avow that in practice it was not attainable.

And here let me ask Christians what they expect ministers to preach? Do you think they have a right to connive at any sin in you, or to insist upon any thing else as a practicable fact than that you should abandon every iniquity? It is sometimes said, that with us entire sanctification is a hobby. But I would humbly ask what else can we preach? Is not every

minister bound to insist in every sermon that men shall wholly obey God? And because they will not compromise with any degree or form of sin, are they to be reproached for making the subject of entire obedience a hobby? I ask, by what authority can a minister preach any thing less? And how shall any minister dare to inculcate the duty as a theory, and yet not insist upon it as a practical matter, as something to be expected of every subject of God's kingdom?

- 17. A denial of this doctrine has the natural tendency to beget the very apathy witnessed in the Church. Professors of religion go on in sin, without much conviction of its wickedness. Sin unblushingly stalks abroad even in the Church of God, and does not fill Christians with horror, because they expect its existence as a thing of course. Tell a young convert that he must expect to backslide, and he will do so of course, and with comparatively little remorse, because he looks upon it as a kind of necessity. And being led to expect it, you find him in a few months after his conversion away from God, and not at all horrified with his state. Just so you inculcate the idea among Christians that they are not expected to abandon all sin, and they will of course go on in sin with comparative indifference. You reprove them for their sins, and they will say, "O we are imperfect creatures; we do not pretend to be perfect, nor do we expect we ever shall be in this world." Many such answers as these will show you at once the God dishonoring and soul-ruining tendency of a denial of this doctrine.
- 18. A denial of this doctrine prepares the minds of ministers to temporize and wink at great iniquity in their churches. Feeling as they certainly must, if they disbelieve this doctrine, that a great amount of sin in all believers is to be expected as a thing of course, their whole preaching, and spirit, and demeanor, will be such as to beget a great degree of apathy among Christians in regard to their abominable sins.
- 19. If this doctrine is not true, how profane and blasphemous is the covenant of every church of every evangelical denomination. Every church requires its members to make a solemn covenant with God and with the church, in the presence of God and angels, and with their hands upon the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the blessed Jesus, "to abstain from all ungodliness and every worldly lust, to live soberly and righteously in this present world." Now if the doctrine of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life is not true, what profane mockery is this covenant! It is a covenant to live in a state of entire sanctification, made under the most solemn circumstances, enforced by the most awful sanctions, and insisted upon by the minister of God standing at the altar. Now what right has any man on earth to require less than this?

And again, what right has any man on earth to require this, unless it is a practical thing?

Suppose when this covenant was proposed to a convert about to unite with the church, he should take it to his closet, and spread it before the Lord, and inquire whether it was right for him to make such a covenant--and whether the grace of the gospel can enable him to fulfill it. Do you suppose the Lord Jesus would reply, that if he made that covenant, he certainly would, and must as a matter of course live in the habitual violation of it, as long as he live, and that His grace was not sufficient to enable him to keep it? Would he in such a case have any right to take upon himself this covenant? No, no more than he

would have a right to lie.

- 20. It has long been maintained by orthodox divines, that a person is not a Christian who does not aim at living without sin--that unless he aim at perfection, he manifestly consents to live in sin; and is therefore certainly impenitent. It has been, and I think truly, said, that if a man does not in the fixed purpose of his heart, aim at total abstinence from sin, and at being wholly conformed to the will of God, he is not yet regenerated, and does not so much as mean to cease from abusing God.

Now if this is so, and I believe it certainly is, I would ask how a person can aim at and intend to do what he knows to be impossible. Is it not a contradiction to say that a man can intend to do what he knows he cannot do? To this it has been objected, that if true, it proves too much--that it would prove that no man ever was a Christian who did not believe in this doctrine. To this I reply:

- (1.) A man may believe in the attainability of and aim at attaining what is really a state of entire sanctification, although he may not call it by that name. This I believe to be the real fact with Christians: and they would much more frequently attain what they aim at, did they know how to appropriate the grace of Christ to their own circumstances. Mrs. President Edwards, for example, firmly believed that she could attain to a state of entire consecration. She aimed at and manifestly attained it, and yet such were her views of physical depravity, that she did not call her state one of entire sanctification. It has been common for Christians to suppose that a state of entire consecration was attainable; but while they believed in physical depravity, they would not of course call even entire consecration, entire sanctification. Mrs. Edwards believed in, aimed at, and attained, entire consecration. She aimed at what she believed was attainable, and nothing more. She called it by the same name with her husband, who was opposed to the doctrine of Christian perfection, as held by the Wesleyan Methodists; manifestly on the ground of his notions of physical depravity. I care not what this state is called, if the thing be fully explained and insisted upon, together with the means of attaining it. Call it what you please, Christian perfection, heavenly mindedness, or a state of entire consecration; by all these I understand the same thing. And it is certain, that by whatever name it is called, the thing must be aimed at to be attained. The practicability of its attainment must be admitted, or it cannot be aimed at.

And now I would humbly inquire whether it is not true, that to preach any thing short of this is not to give countenance to sin?

- 21. Another argument in favor of this doctrine is that the gospel, as a matter of fact, has often, not only temporarily but permanently and perfectly overcome every form of sin, in different individuals. Who has not seen the most beastly lusts, drunkenness, lasciviousness, and every kind of abomination, long indulged and fully ripe, entirely and for ever slain by the power of the grace of God? Now how was this done? Only by bringing this sin fully into the light of the gospel, and showing the individual the relation that sin sustained to the death of Christ.

Now nothing is wanting to slay any and every sin, but for the mind to be fully baptized

into the death of Christ, and to see the bearings of one's own sins upon the sufferings and agonies and death of the blessed Jesus. Let me state a fact to illustrate my meaning. A habitual and most inveterate smoker of tobacco, of my acquaintance, after having been plied with almost every argument to induce him to break the power of the habit, and relinquish its use, in vain, on a certain occasion, lighted his pipe and was about to put it to his mouth, when the inquiry was started, did Christ die to purchase this vile indulgence for me? He hesitated, but the inquiry pressed him, Did Christ die to purchase this vile indulgence for me? The relation of this conduct to the death of Christ, instantly broke the power of the habit, and from that day he has been free.

I could relate many other facts more striking than this, where a similar view of the relation of a particular sin to the atonement of Christ, has in a moment, not only broken the power of the habit, but destroyed entirely and for ever, the appetite for similar indulgences.

If the most inveterate habits of sin, and even those that involve physical consequences, and have deeply debased the physical constitution, and rendered it a source of overpowering temptation to the mind, can be and often have been utterly broken up, and for ever slain, by the grace of God, why should it be doubted that by the same grace, a man can triumph over all sin, and that for ever.

- 22. If this doctrine is not true, what is true upon the subject? It is certainly of great importance that ministers should be definite in their instructions, and if Christians are not expected to be wholly conformed to the will of God in this life, how much is expected of them? Who can say, hitherto canst thou, must thou come, but no further? It is certainly absurd, not to say ridiculous, for ministers to be for ever pressing Christians up to higher and higher attainments, saying at every step you can and must go higher, and yet all along informing them that they are expected to fall short of their whole duty--that they can as a matter of fact, be better than they are, far better, indefinitely better; but still it is not expected that they will do their whole duty. I have often been pained to hear men preach who are afraid to commit themselves in favor of the whole truth; and who are yet evidently afraid of falling short, in their instructions of insisting that men shall stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God." They are evidently sadly perplexed to be consistent, and well they may be, for in truth there is no consistence in their views and teachings. If they do not inculcate, as a matter of fact, that men ought to do and are expected to do their whole duty, they are sadly at a loss to know what to inculcate. They have evidently many misgivings about insisting upon less than this, and they fear to go to the full extent of apostolic teaching on this subject. And in their attempts to throw in qualifying terms and caveats, to avoid the impression that they believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification, they place themselves in a truly awkward position. Cases have occurred in which ministers have been asked, how far we may go, must go, and are expected to go, in depending upon the grace of Christ, and how holy men may be, and are expected to be, and must be, in this life? They could give no other answer to this, than that they can be a great deal better than they are. Now this indefiniteness is a great stumbling block to the Church. It cannot be according to the teachings of the Holy Ghost.
- 23. The tendency of a denial of this doctrine is, to my mind, conclusive proof that the doctrine

itself must be true. Many developments in the recent history of the Church throw light upon this subject. Who does not see that the facts developed in the temperance reformation, have a direct and powerful bearing upon this question? It has been ascertained that there is no possibility of completing the temperance reformation, except by adopting the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. Let a temperance lecturer go forth, as an Evangelist to promote revivals on the subject of temperance--let him inveigh against drunkenness, while he admits and defends the moderate use of alcohol, or insinuates, at least, that total abstinence is not expected or practicable. In this stage of the temperance reformation every one can see that such a man could make no progress; that he would be employed like a child in building dams of sand to obstruct the rushing of mighty waters. It is as certain as that causes produce their effects, that no permanent reformation could be effected, short of adopting the total abstinence principle.

And now if this is true as it respects the temperance reformation, how much more so when applied to the subjects of holiness and sin. A man might by some possibility, even in his own strength, over come his habits of drunkenness, and retain, what might be called the temperate use of alcohol. But no such thing is possible in a reformation from sin. Sin is never overcome by any man in his own strength. If he admits into this creed the necessity of any degree of sin, or if he allows in practice any degree of sin, he becomes impenitent--consents to live in sin--and is of course abandoned by the Holy Spirit, the certain result of which is, a relapsing into a state of legal bondage to sin. And this is probably a true history of ninety-nine one hundredths of the Church. It is just what might be expected from the views and practice of the Church upon this subject.

The secret of backsliding is that reformations are not carried deep enough. Christians are not set with all their hearts to aim at a speedy deliverance from all sin. But on the contrary are left and in many instances taught to indulge the expectation that they shall sin as long as they live. I never shall forget probably, the effect produced on my mind by reading, when a young convert, in the diary of David Brainerd, that he never expected to make any considerable attainments in holiness in this life. I can now easily see that this was a natural inference from the theory of physical depravity which he held. But not perceiving this at the time, I doubt not that this expression of his views had a very injurious effect upon me for many years. It led me to reason thus, "If such a man as David Brainerd did not expect to make much advancement in holiness in this life, it is vain for me to expect such a thing."

The fact is, if there be any thing that is important to high attainments in holiness, and to the progress of the work of sanctification in this life, it is the adoption of the principle of total abstinence from sin. Total abstinence from sin, must be every man's motto, or sin will certainly sweep him away as a flood. That cannot possibly be a true principle in temperance, that leaves the causes which produce drunkenness to operate in their full strength. Nor can that be true in holiness which leaves the root unextracted, and the certain causes of spiritual decline and backsliding at work in the very heart of the Church. And I am fully convinced that until Evangelists and Pastors adopt and carry out in principle and practice the principle of total abstinence from all sin, they will as certainly find themselves every few months, called to do their work over again, as a temperance lecturer would who should admit the moderate use of alcohol.

- 24. Again, the tendency of the opposite view of this subject, shows that that cannot be true. Who does not know, that to call upon sinners to repent, and at the same time to inform them that they will not, and cannot, and are not expected to repent, would for ever prevent their repentance. Suppose you say to a sinner, you are naturally able to repent; but it is certain that you never will repent in this life, either with or without the Holy Ghost. Who does not see that such teaching would as surely prevent his repentance as he believed it? So, say to a professor of religion, you are naturally able to be wholly conformed to God; but it is certain that you never will be in this life, either in your own strength or by the grace of God. If this teaching be believed, it will just as certainly prevent his sanctification as the other teaching would the repentance of the sinner. I can speak from experience on this subject. While I inculcated the common views, I was often instrumental in bringing Christians under great conviction, and into a state of temporary repentance and faith. But falling short of urging them up to a point where they would become so acquainted with Christ, as to abide in Him, they would of course soon relapse again into their former state. I never saw, and can now understand that I had no reason to expect to see, under the instructions which I then gave, such a state of religious feeling, such steady and confirmed walking with God, among Christians, as I have seen since the change in my views and instructions.

Some further considerations under this head, I must defer till my next.

LECTURE V.

February 26, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 5

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

I might urge a great many other considerations, and as I have said, fill a book with scriptures, and arguments, and demonstrations, of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life.

But I forbear, and at present will urge only one more consideration, a consideration which has great weight in some minds. It is a question of great importance, at least in some minds, whether any actually ever did attain this state. Some who believe it attainable, do not consider it of much importance to show that it has actually been attained. Now I freely admit, that it may be attainable, although it never has been attained. Yet it appears to me that as a matter of encouragement to the Church, it is of great importance whether, as a matter of fact, a state of entire holiness has been attained in this life. This question covers much ground. But for the sake of brevity, I design to examine but one case, and see whether there is reason to believe that in one instance, at least, it has been attained. The case to which I allude is that of Paul. And I propose to take up and examine the

passages that speak of him, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is evidence that he ever attained to this state in this life.

And here let me say that to my own mind it seems plain, that Paul and John, to say nothing of the other Apostles, designed and expected the Church to understand them as speaking from experience, and as having received of that fulness which they taught to be in Christ and in His gospel.

And I wish to say again and more expressly, that I do not rest the practicability of attaining a state of entire holiness at all upon the question, whether any ever have attained it any more than I would rest the question, whether the world ever will be converted upon the fact whether it ever has been converted. I have been surprised, when the fact that a state of entire holiness has been attained, is urged as one argument among a great many to prove its attainability, and that too merely as an encouragement to Christians to lay hold upon this blessing, that objectors and reviewers fasten upon this as the doctrine of sanctification, as if by calling this particular question in doubt, they could overthrow all the other proof of its attainability. Now this is utterly absurd. When, then, I examine the character of Paul with this object in view, if it should not appear clear to you that he did attain this state, you are not to overlook the fact, that its attainability is settled by other arguments, on grounds entirely independent of the question whether it has been attained or not; and that I merely use this as an argument, simply because to me it appears forcible, and to afford great encouragement to Christians to press after this state.

I will first make some remarks in regard to the manner in which the language of Paul, when speaking of himself, should be understood; and then proceed to an examination of the passages which speak of his Christian character.

1. His revealed character, demands that we should understand him to mean all that he says, when speaking in his own favor.

2. The Spirit of inspiration would guard him against speaking too highly of himself.

3. No man ever seemed to possess greater modesty, and to feel more unwilling to exalt his own attainments.

4. If he considered himself as not having attained a state of entire sanctification, and as often, if not in all things, falling short of his duty, we may expect to find him acknowledging this in the deepest self-abasement.

5. If he is charged with living in sin, and with being wicked in any thing, we may expect him, when speaking under inspiration, not to justify, but unequivocally condemn himself in those things.

Now in view of these facts, let us examine those scriptures in which he speaks of himself and is spoken of by others.

- o (1.) 1 Thess. 2:10: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Upon this text I remark:

- (a) Here he unqualifiedly asserts his own holiness. This language is very strong, "How holily, justly, and unblamably." If to be holy, just, and unblamable, be not entire sanctification, what is?
 - (b) He appeals to the heart-searching God for the truth of what he says, and to their own observation; calling on God and on them also to bear witness, that he had been holy and without blame.
 - (c) Here we have the testimony of an inspired Apostle, in the most unqualified language, asserting his own entire sanctification. Was he deceived? Can it be that he knew himself all the time to have been living in sin? If such language as this does not amount to an unqualified assertion that he had lived among them without sin, what can be known by the use of human language?
- (2.) 2 Cor. 6:3-7: "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things, approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Upon these verses I remark:
- (a) Paul asserts that he gave no offence in any thing, but in all things approved himself as a minister of God. Among other things he did this, "by pureness," "by the Holy Ghost," "by love unfeigned," "and by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." How could so modest a man as Paul speak of himself in this manner, unless he knew himself to be in a state of entire sanctification, and thought it of great importance that the Church should know it?
- (3.) 2 Cor. 1:12: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." This passage plainly implies the same thing, and was manifestly said for the same purpose--to declare the greatness of the grace of God as manifested in himself.
- (4.) Acts 24:16: "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Paul doubtless at this time had an enlightened conscience. If an inspired Apostle could affirm, that he "always" had a "conscience void of offence toward God and toward men", must he not have been in a state of entire sanctification?
- (5.) 2 Tim. 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." Here again he affirms, that he serves God with a pure conscience. Could this be, if he was often, and perhaps every day, as some suppose, violating his conscience?

- (6.) Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." This does not assert, but strongly implies that he lived without sin.
- (7.) Gal. 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This text also affords the same inference as above.
- (8.) Phil. 1:21: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Here the Apostle affirms that for him to live was as if Christ lived in the Church. How could he say this, unless his example, and doctrine, and spirit, were those of Christ?
- (9.) Acts 20:26: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." Upon this I remark:
 - (a) This passage, taken in its connection, shows clearly, the impression that Paul desired to make upon the minds of those to whom he speaks.
 - (b) It is certain that he could in no proper sense be "pure of the blood of all men," unless he had done his whole duty. If he had been sinfully lacking in any grace, or virtue, or labor, could he have said this? Certainly not.
- (10.) 1 Cor. 4:16, 17: "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every Church." I remark:
 - (a) Here Paul manifestly sets himself up as an example to the Church. How could he do this, if he were living in sin?
 - (b) He sent Timotheus to them to refresh their memories, in regard to his doctrine and practice; implying that what he taught in every Church, he himself practiced.
- (11.) 1 Cor. 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Here Paul commands them to follow him, "as he followed Christ;" not so far as he followed Christ, as some seem to understand it, but to follow him because he followed Christ. How could he, in this unqualified manner, command the Church to copy his example, unless he knew himself to be blameless?
- (12.) Phil. 3:17, 20: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Here again, Paul calls upon the Church to follow him, and particularly to notice those that did copy his example, and assigns as the reason, "for our conversation is in heaven."

- (13.) Phil. 4:9: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." The Philippians were commanded to "do those things which they had learned, and received, and SEEN in him." And then he adds, that if they "do those things, the God of peace shall be with them." Now can it be that he meant that they should understand any thing less, than that he had lived without sin among them?

I will next examine those passages which are supposed by some, to imply that Paul was not in a state of entire sanctification.

- (14.) Acts 15:36-40: "And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus: and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren, unto the grace of God." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (a) This contention between Paul and Barnabas was founded upon the fact, that John, who was a nephew of Barnabas, had once abruptly left them in their travels, it would seem without any justifiable reason, and had returned home.
 - (b) It appears that the confidence of Barnabas in his nephew was restored.
 - (c) That Paul was not as yet satisfied of the stability of his character, and thought it dangerous to trust him as a traveling companion and fellow-laborer. It is not intimated, nor can it be fairly implied that either of them sinned in this contention.
 - (d) It sufficiently accounts for what occurred, that they disagreed in their views of the expediency of taking John with them.
 - (e) Being men of principle, neither of them felt it to be his duty to yield to the opinion of the other.
 - (f) If either were to be blamed, it seems that Barnabas was in fault, rather than Paul, inasmuch as he determined to take John with him without having consulted Paul. And he persisted in this determination until he met with such firm resistance on the part of Paul, that he took John and sailed abruptly for Cyprus; while Paul choosing Silas, as he companion, was recommended by the brethren to the grace of God, and departed. Now certainly there is nothing in this transaction, that Paul or any good man, or an angel, under the circumstances, need to have been ashamed of, that we can discover. It does not appear, that Paul ever acted more from a regard to the glory of God and the good of religion, than in this transaction. And I would humbly inquire what spirit is that which finds sufficient evidence in this case to

charge an inspired Apostle with rebellion against God? But even admitting that he did sin in this case, where is the evidence that he was not afterwards sanctified when he wrote the epistles?--for this was before the writing of any of his epistles.

- (15.) Acts 23:1-5: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." In this case sinful anger has been imputed to Paul; but so far as I can see, without any just reason. To my mind it seems plain, that the contrary is to be inferred. It appears that Paul was not personally acquainted with the then officiating high priest. And he manifested the utmost regard to the authority of God in quoting from the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people"--implying, that notwithstanding the abuse he had received, he should not have made the reply, had he known him to have been the high priest.
- (16.) Rom. 7: from the 14th to the 25th verse, have by many been supposed to be an epitome of Paul's experience at the time he wrote the epistle. Upon this I remark:
 - (a) The connection and drift of Paul's reasoning shows that the case of which he was speaking, whether his own or the case of some one else, was adduced by him to illustrate the influence of the law upon the carnal mind.
 - (b) This is a case in which sin had the entire dominion, and overcame all his resolutions of obedience.
 - (c) That his use of the singular pronoun and in the first person, proves nothing in regard to whether or not he was speaking of himself, for this is common with him, and with other writers, when using illustrations.
 - (d) He keeps up the personal pronoun and passes into the 8th chapter; at the beginning of which, he represents himself or the person of whom he is speaking, as being not only in a different but in an exactly opposite state of mind. Now if the seventh chapter contains Paul's experience, whose experience is this in the eighth chapter? Are we to understand them both as the experience of Paul? If so, we must understand him as first speaking of his experience before and then after he was sanctified. He begins the eighth chapter by saying, "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and assigns as a reason, that "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death." The law of sin and death was that law in his members, or the influence of the flesh, of which he had so bitterly complained in the seventh chapter. But now it appears that he has passed into a state in which

he is made free from this influence of the flesh--is emancipated and dead to the world, and to the flesh, and in a state in which "there is no condemnation." Now if there was no condemnation in the state in which he was, it must have been, either because he did not sin; or, if he did sin, because the law did not condemn him; or because the law of God was repealed or abrogated. Now if the penalty of the law was so set aside in his case, that he could sin without condemnation, this is a real abrogation of the law. For a law without a penalty is no law, and if the law is set aside, there is no longer any standard, and he was neither sinful nor holy. But as the law was not and cannot be set aside, its penalty was not and cannot be so abrogated as not to condemn every sin. If Paul lived without condemnation, it must be because he lived without sin.

To me it does not appear as if Paul speaks of his own experience in the seventh chapter of Romans, but that he merely supposes a case by way of illustration, and speaks in the first person and in the present tense, simply because it was convenient and suitable to his purpose. His object manifestly was, in this and in the beginning of the eighth chapter, to contrast the influence of the law and of the gospel--to describe in the seventh chapter the state of a man who was living in sin, and every day condemned by the law, convicted and constantly struggling with his own corruptions, but continually overcome,--and in the eighth chapter to exhibit a person in the enjoyment of gospel liberty, where the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in the heart by the grace of Christ. The seventh chapter may well apply either to a person in a backslidden state, or to a convicted person who had never been converted. The eighth chapter can clearly be applicable to none but to those who are in a state of entire sanctification.

I have already said that the seventh chapter contains the history of one over whom sin has dominion. Now to suppose that this was the experience of Paul when he wrote the epistle, or of any one who was in the liberty of the gospel, is absurd and contrary to the experience of every person who ever enjoyed gospel liberty. And further, this is as expressly contradicted in the sixth chapter as it can be. As I said, the seventh chapter exhibits one over whom sin has dominion; but God says, in the sixth chapter and fourteenth verse, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

I remark finally upon the passage, that if Paul was speaking of himself in the seventh chapter of Romans, and really giving a history of his own experience, it proves nothing at all in regard to his subsequent sanctification; for,

- (e) If this was his experience at the time he wrote the epistle, it would prove nothing in regard to what afterwards transpired in his own experience.
- (f) The eighth chapter shows conclusively, that it was not this experience at the time he wrote the epistle. The fact that the translators have separated the seventh and eighth chapters, as I have before said, has led to much error in the understanding of this passage. Nothing is more certain than that the two chapters were designed to describe not only different experiences, but experiences opposite to each other. And that both these experiences should belong to the same person at the same time, is manifestly impossible. If therefore Paul is speaking in this connection of his own experience, we are bound to understand the eighth chapter as describing his experience at the time he wrote the epistle; and the seventh chapter as descriptive of a former experience.

Now therefore, if any one understands the seventh chapter as describing a Christian experience, he must understand it as giving the exercises of one in a very imperfect state; and the eighth chapter as descriptive of a soul in a state of entire sanctification. So that this epistle, instead of militating against the idea of Paul's entire sanctification, upon the supposition that he was speaking of himself, fully establishes the fact that he was in that state.

- (17.) Phil. 3:10-15: "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. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (a) Here is plain allusion to the Olympic games, in which men ran for a prize, and were not crowned until the end of the race, however well they might run.
 - (b) Paul speaks of two kinds of perfection here, one of which he claims to have attained, and the other he had not. The perfection which he had not attained, was that which he did not expect to attain until the end of his race, nor indeed until he had attained the resurrection from the dead. Until then he was not and did not expect to be perfect, in the sense that he should "apprehend all that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus." But all this does not imply that he was not living without sin, any more than it implies that Christ was living in sin when he said, "I must walk today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." In this Christ speaks of a perfection which he had not attained.

Now it is manifest that it was the glorified state to which Paul had not attained, and which perfection he was pressing after. But in the 15th verse, he speaks of another kind of perfection which he professed to have attained. "Let us therefore," he says, "as many as are perfect, be thus minded;" i.e. let us be pressing after this high state of perfection in glory, "if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Now it is manifest to my mind, that Paul does not in this passage, teach expressly or impliedly that he was living in sin, but the direct opposite--that he meant to say as he had said in many other places, that he was unblamable in respect to sin, but that he was aspiring after higher attainments, and meant to be aspiring after higher attainments, and meant to be satisfied with nothing short of eternal glory.

In relation to the character of Paul, let me say:

- (a) If Paul was not sinless, he was an extravagant boaster, and such language used by any minister in these days would be considered as the language of an extravagant boaster.
- (b) This setting himself up as an example, so frequently and fully, without any caution or qualification, was highly dangerous to the interests of the Church, if he were not in a state of entire sanctification.
- (c) It was as wicked as it was dangerous.
- (d) His language in appealing to God, that in his life and heart he was blameless, was blasphemous, unless he was really what he professed to be; and if he was what he professed to be, he was in a state of entire sanctification.
- (e) There is no reason for doubting his having attained this state.
- (f) It is doing dishonor to God, to maintain, under these circumstances, that Paul had not attained the blessing of entire sanctification.
- (g) He no where confesses sin after he became an Apostle, but invariably justifies himself, appealing to man and to God, for his entire integrity and blamelessness of heart and life.
- (h) To accuse him of sin in these circumstances, without evidence, is not only highly injurious to him, but disgraceful to the cause of religion.
- (i) To charge him with sin, when he claims to have been blameless, is either to accuse him of falsehood or delusion.
- (k) To maintain the sinfulness of this Apostle, is to deny the grace of the gospel, and charge God foolishly. And I cannot but inquire, why is this great effort in the Church to maintain, that Paul lived in sin, and was never wholly sanctified till

death?

LECTURE VI.

March 11, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 6

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

In pursuing this subject, I am

VII. To answer some objections to the doctrine of entire sanctification.

In proceeding to answer some of the more prominent objections to the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, I will begin with those passages of scripture that are supposed to contradict it.

- 1. 1 Kings 8:46: "If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near." On this passage I remark:
 - (1.) That this sentiment, in nearly the same language, is repeated in 2 Chron. 6:26, and in Eccl. 7:20, where the same original word in the same form is used.
 - (2.) These are the strongest passages I know of in the Old Testament, and the same remarks are applicable to the three.
 - (3.) I will quote, for the satisfaction of the reader, the note of Adam Clarke upon this passage, and also that of Barclay, the celebrated and highly spiritual author of "An Apology for the True Christian Divinity." And let me say, that they appear to me to be satisfactory answers to the objection founded upon these passages.

CLARKE: "If they sin against thee."--This must refer to some general defection from truth; to some species of false worship, idolatry, or corruption of the truth and ordinances of the Most High; as for it, they are here stated to be delivered into the hands of their enemies, and carried away captive, which was the general punishment of idolatry; and what is called, ver. 47, acting perversely, and committing wickedness.

"If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not."

The second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition, in the first clause, entirely nugatory; for, if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, IF they sin: but this contradiction is taken away by reference to the original *ki yechetau lak*, which should be translated IF they shall sin against thee: or, should they sin against thee, *ki ein Adam asher lo yecheta*; "For there is no man that may not sin:" i.e. there is no man impeccable, none infallible; none that is not liable to transgress. This is the true meaning of the phrase in various parts of the Bible, and so our translators have understood the original; for, even in the 31st verse of this chapter, they have translated *yecheta*, IF a man TRESPASS; which certainly implies he might or might not do it: and in this way they have translated the same word, IF a soul SIN, in Lev. 5:1, and 6:2, 1 Sam. 2:25, 2 Chron. 6:22, and in several other places. The truth is, the Hebrew has no mood to express words in the permissive or optative way, but to express this sense it uses the future tense of the conjugation *kal*.

"This text has been a wonderful stronghold for all who believe that there is no redemption from sin in this life; that no man can live without committing sin: and that we cannot be entirely freed from it till we die. 1. The text speaks no such doctrine, it only speaks of the possibility of every man sinning; and this must be true of a state of probation. 2. There is not another text in the divine records that is more to the purpose than this. 3. The doctrine is flatly in opposition to the design of the gospel; for Jesus came to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil. 4. It is a dangerous and destructive doctrine, and should be blotted out of every Christian's creed. There are too many who are seeking to excuse their crimes by all means in their power; and we need not embody their excuses in a creed, to complete their deception, by stating that their sins are unavoidable."

BARCLAY: "Secondly--Another objection is from two places of scripture, much of one signification. The one is, 1 Kings 8:46: For there is no man that sinneth not. The other is Eccl. 7:20: For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

"I answer: 1. These affirm nothing of a daily and continual sinning, so as never to be redeemed from it; but only that all have sinned, or that there is none that doth not sin, though not always, so as never to cease to sin; and in this lies the question.

Yea, in that place of the Kings he speaks within two verses of the returning of such with all their souls and hearts; which implies a possibility of leaving off sin. 2. There is a respect to be had to the seasons and dispensations; for if it should be granted that in Solomon's time there were none that sinned not, it will not follow that there are none such now, or that it is a thing not now attainable by the grace of God under the gospel. 3. And lastly, This whole objection hangs upon a false interpretation; for the original Hebrew word may be read in the Potential Mood, thus, There is no man who may not sin, as well as in the Indicative; so both the Old Latin, Junius, and Tremellius, and Votablus, have it; and the same word is so used, Psalm 119:11: Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, in the Potential Mood, and not in the Indicative; which being more answerable to the universal scope of the scriptures, the testimony of the truth, and the sense of almost all interpreters, doubtless ought to be so understood, and the other interpretation rejected as spurious."

- o (4.) Whatever may be thought of the views of these authors, to me, it is a plain and satisfactory answer to the objection founded upon these passages, that the objection might be strictly true under the Old Testament dispensation, and prove nothing in regard to the attainability of a state of entire sanctification under the New. What, does the New Testament dispensation differ nothing from the Old in its advantages for the acquisition of holiness? If it be true that no one under the comparatively dark dispensation of Judaism, attained a state of entire and permanent sanctification, does that prove such a state unattainable under the Gospel? It is expressly stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "the Old Covenant made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." Under the Old Covenant, God expressly promised that He would make a new one with the house of Israel in "writing the law in their hearts," and in "engraving it in their inward parts." And this New Covenant was to be made with the house of Israel, under the Christian dispensation. What then do all such passages in the Old Testament prove in relation to the privileges and holiness of Christians under the New Testament?
- o (5.) Whether any of the Old Testament saints did so far receive the New Covenant by way of anticipation, as to enter upon a state of entire and permanent sanctification, it is not my present purpose to inquire. Nor will I inquire, whether, admitting that Solomon said in his day, that "there was not a just man upon the earth that liveth and sinneth not," the same could with equal truth have been asserted of every generation under the Jewish dispensation.
- o (6.) It is expressly asserted of Abraham and multitudes of the Old Testament saints, that they "died in faith, not having received the promises." Now what can this mean? It cannot be that they did not know the promises, for to them the promises were made. It cannot mean that they did not receive Christ, for the Bible expressly asserts that they did,--that "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day,"--that Moses, and indeed all the Old Testament

saints, had so much knowledge of Christ, as a Savior to be revealed, as to bring them into a state of salvation. But still they did not receive the promise of the Spirit as it is poured out under the Christian dispensation. They did not receive the light, and the glory of the Christian dispensation, nor the fulness of the Holy Spirit. And it is asserted in the Bible, that "they without us," i.e. without our privileges, "could not be made perfect."

- 2. The next objection is founded upon the Lord's Prayer. In this, Christ has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Here it is objected that if a person should become entirely sanctified, he could no longer use this clause of this prayer, which it is said, was manifestly designed to be used by the Church to the end of time. Upon this prayer I remark:
 - (1.) Christ has taught us to pray for entire and permanent sanctification, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."
 - (2.) He designed that we should expect this prayer to be answered, or that we should mock God, by asking what we did not believe was agreeable to His will, and that too, which we know could not consistently be granted; and that we are to repeat this insult to God as often as we pray.
 - (3.) The petition for forgiveness of our trespasses it is plain, must apply to past sins, and not to sins we are committing at the time we make the prayer; for it would be absurd and abominable to pray for the forgiveness of a sin which we were then in the act of committing.
 - (4.) This prayer cannot properly be made in respect to any sin of which we have not repented; for it would be highly abominable in the sight of God, to pray for the forgiveness of a sin of which we did not repent.
 - (5.) If there be any hour or day in which a man has committed no actual sin, he could not consistently make this prayer in reference to that hour or that day.
 - (6.) But at that very time, it would be highly proper for him to make this prayer in relation to all his past sins, and that too although he may have repented of and confessed them, and prayed for their forgiveness, a thousand times before.
 - (7.) And although his sins may be forgiven, he ought still to feel penitent in view of them,--to repent of them both in this world and in the world to come, as often as he remembers them. And it is perfectly suitable, so long as he lives in the world, to say the least, to repent and repeat the request for forgiveness. For myself, I am unable to see why this passage should be made a stumbling block; for if it be improper to pray for the forgiveness of past sins of which we have repented, then it is improper to pray for forgiveness at all. And if this prayer cannot be used with propriety in reference to past sins, of which we have already repented, it cannot properly be used at all, except upon the absurd supposition, that we are to pray for the forgiveness of sins which we are now committing, and of which we have not repented. And if it be improper to use this form of

prayer in reference to all past sins of which we have repented, it is just as improper to use it in reference to sins committed to-day or yesterday, of which we have repented.

- 3. Another objection is founded on James 3:1, 2: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Upon this passage I remark:
 - (1.) The term rendered masters here, may be rendered teachers, critics, or sensors, and be understood either in a good or bad sense. The Apostle exhorts the brethren not to be many masters, because if they are so they will incur the greater condemnation; "for," says he, "in many things we offend all." The fact that we all offend is here urged as a reason why we should not be many masters; which shows that the term masters is here used in a bad sense. "Be not many masters," for if we are masters, "we shall receive the greater condemnation," because we are all offenders. Now I understand this to be the simple meaning of this passage; do not many [or any] of you become sensors, or critics, and set yourselves up to judge and condemn others. For inasmuch as you have all sinned yourselves, and we are all great offenders, we shall receive the greater condemnation, if we set ourselves as sensors. "For with what judgment ye judge ye shall judge, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
 - (2.) It does not appear to me that the Apostle designs to affirm any thing at all of the present character of himself or of those to whom he wrote; nor to have had the remotest allusion to the doctrine of entire sanctification, but simply to affirm a well established truth in its application to a particular sin; that if they became sensors, and injuriously condemned others, inasmuch as they had all committed many sins, they should receive the greater condemnation.
 - (3.) That the Apostle did not design to deny the doctrine of Christian perfection or entire sanctification, as maintained in these lectures, seems evident from the fact that he immediately subjoins, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body."
- 4. Another objection is founded upon 1 John 1:8: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Upon this I remark:
 - (1.) This verse is immediately preceded by the assertion that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Now it would be very remarkable, if immediately after this assertion, the Apostle should mean to say that it does not cleanse us from all sin, and if we say it does we deceive ourselves. But if this objection be true, it involves the Apostle in as palpable a contradiction as could be expressed.
 - (2.) If the Apostle meant to say that we deceive ourselves, if we suppose ourselves to be in a state of entire sanctification, his assertion in the next verse is truly another wonderful contradiction. "If," he continues, "we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In another place he says, "all

unrighteousness is sin." Now, if it be true that God is really just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness or from all sin, and "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us"--not shall, but actually does cleanse us,--"from all sin;" how remarkable it would be, if, between two such assertions as these, the Apostle meant to be understood to teach, that if we say His blood cleanseth us from all unrighteousness, we deceive ourselves!

- (3.) But the tenth verse shows plainly what the Apostle meant, for he merely repeats what he had said in the eighth verse: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar."

This then is the meaning of the whole passage. If we say that we are not sinners, i.e. have no sin to need the blood of Christ, that we have never sinned, and consequently need no Savior, we deceive ourselves. For we have sinned, and nothing but the blood of Christ cleanseth us from sin. And now, if we will not deny but confess that we have sinned, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "But if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

- 5. It has been objected to the view I have given of Jer. 31:31-34, that if that passage is to be considered as a promise of entire sanctification, this proves too much. Inasmuch as it is said, "they shall all know the Lord from the least to the greatest," therefore, says the objector, it would prove that all the Church has been in a state of entire sanctification ever since the commencement of the New Testament dispensation. To this objection I answer:
 - (1.) I have already, I trust, shown that this promise is conditioned upon faith, and that the blessing cannot possibly be received but by faith.
 - (2.) It is doubtless true that many have received this covenant in its fulness.
 - (3.) A promise may be unconditional or absolute, and certain of a fulfillment in relation to the whole Church as a body, in some period of its history, which is nevertheless conditional in relation to its application to any particular individuals or generation of individuals.
 - (4.) I think it is in entire keeping with the prophecies to understand this passage as expressly promising to the Church a day, when all her members shall be sanctified, and when "holiness to the Lord shall be written upon the bells of the horses." Indeed it appears to be abundantly foretold that the Church as a body shall, in this world, enter into a state of entire sanctification, in some period of her history; and that this will be the carrying out of these promises of the New Covenant, of which we are speaking. But it is by no means an objection to this view of the subject, that all the Church have not yet entered into this state.

It has been maintained, that this promise in Jer. has been fulfilled already. This has been argued--

- (1.) From the fact that the promise has no condition, expressed or implied, and the

responsibility therefore, rests with God.

- o (2.) That the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews quotes it as to be fulfilled at the advent of Christ. Now to this I answer:

It might as well be argued that all the rest of the promises and prophecies relating to the gospel day were fulfilled, because the time had come when the promise was due. Suppose it were denied that the world would ever be converted, or that there ever would be any more piety in the world than there has been and is at present; and when the promises and prophecies respecting the latter day glory, and the conversion of the world, should be adduced in proof, that the world is to be converted, it should be replied that these promises had already been fulfilled--that they were unconditional--and that the advent of the Messiah, was the time when they became due. But suppose, that in answer to this, it should be urged that nothing has ever yet occurred in the history of this world that seems at all to have come up to the meaning of these promises and prophecies--that the world has never been in the state which seems to be plainly described in these promises and prophecies--and that it cannot be that any thing the world has yet experienced is what is meant by such language as is used in the Bible, in relation to the future state of the world. Now suppose, to this it should be replied, that the event has shown what the promises and prophecies really meant--that we are to interpret the language by the fact--that as the promises and prophecies were unconditional, and the gospel day has really come when they were to be fulfilled, we certainly know, whatever their language may be, that they meant nothing more than what the world has already realized? This would be precisely like the reasoning of some persons in relation to Jer. 31:31-34. They say--

- (a) The promises are without condition.
- (b) The time has come for their fulfillment. Therefore the world has realized their fulfillment, and all that was intended by them; that the facts in the case settle the question of construction and interpretation; and we know that they never intended to promise a state of entire sanctification, because as a matter of fact no such state has been realized by the Church. Indeed! Then the Bible is the most hyperbolic, not to say ridiculous book in the universe. If what the world has seen in regard to the extension and universal prevalence of the Redeemer's kingdom, is all that the promises relating to these events really mean, then the Bible of all books in the world, is the most calculated to deceive mankind. But who, after all, in the exercise of his sober sense, will admit any such reasoning as this? Who does not know, or may not know, if he will use his common sense, that although these promises and prophecies are unconditionally expressed, yet that they are as a matter of fact really conditioned upon a right exercise of human agency, and that a time is to come, when the world shall be converted; and that the conversion of the world implies in itself a vastly higher state of religious feeling and action in the Church than has, for centuries, or perhaps ever been witnessed--and that the promise of the New Covenant is still to be fulfilled in a higher sense than it ever has been? If any man doubts this, I must believe that he does not understand his Bible.

Faith, then, is an indispensable condition of the fulfillment of all promises of spiritual blessings, the reception of which involves the exercise of our agency.

Again, it is not a little curious, that those who give this interpretation to these promises imagine that they see a very close connection, if not an absolute identity of our views and those of modern Antinomian Perfectionists. Now it is of importance to remark, that this is one of the leading peculiarities of that sect. They insist that these are promises without condition, and that consequently their own watchfulness, prayers, exertions, and the right exercise of their own agency, are not at all to be taken into the account in the matter of their perseverance in holiness--that the responsibility is thrown entirely upon Christ, inasmuch as His promises are without condition. The thing that He has promised, say they, is that, without any condition, He will keep them in a state of entire sanctification--that therefore, for them to confess sin, is to accuse Christ of breaking His promises. For them to make any efforts at perseverance in holiness is to set aside the gospel and go back to the law. For them even to fear that they shall sin, is to fear that Christ will tell a lie.

The fact is that this, and their setting aside the moral law, are the two great errors of their whole system. It would be easy to show, that the adoption of this sentiment, that these promises are without condition, expressed or implied, has led to some of their most fanatical and absurd opinions and practices. They take the ground that no condition is expressed, and that therefore none is implied; overlooking the fact, that the very nature of the thing promised, implies that faith is the condition upon which its fulfillment must depend. It is hoped, therefore, that our brethren who charge us with perfectionism, will be led to see that to themselves, and not to us, does this charge belong.

These are the principal passages that occur to my mind, and those I believe upon which the principal stress has been laid by the opposers of this doctrine. And as I do not wish to protract the discussion, I shall omit the examination of other passages, as I design in my future lectures to answer such objections as may seem to be of weight. This I design to do without either the spirit or the form of controversy, noticing and answering such objections as may from time to time occur to my own mind, or as may be suggested by others.

[Objections concluded in our next.]

LECTURE VII.

March 25, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 7

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole

spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

There are many objections to the doctrine of entire sanctification, besides those derived from the passages of scripture I have considered. Some of these objections, are doubtless honestly felt, and deserve to be considered. I will then proceed to notice such of them as now occur to my mind.

- 6. It is objected that the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, tends to the errors of modern perfectionism. This objection has been urged by some good men, and, I doubt not, honestly urged. But still I cannot believe that they have duly considered the matter. It seems to me that one fact will set aside this objection. It is well known that the Wesleyan Methodists have, as a denomination, from the earliest period of their history, maintained this doctrine in all its length and breadth. Now if such is the tendency of the doctrine, it is passing strange that this tendency has never developed itself in that denomination. So far as I can learn, the Methodists have been perfectly exempt from the errors held by modern perfectionists. Perfectionists, as a body, and I believe with very few exceptions, have arisen out of those denominations that deny the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life.

Now the reason of this is obvious to my mind. When professors of religion, who have been all their life subject to bondage, begin to inquire earnestly for deliverance from their sins, they have found neither sympathy nor instruction, in regard to the prospect of getting rid of them in this life. Then they have gone to the Bible, and there found, in almost every part of it, Christ presented as a Savior from their sins. But when they proclaim this truth, they are at once treated as heretics and fanatics by their brethren, until, being overcome of evil, they fall into censoriousness; and finding the Church so decidedly and utterly wrong, in opposition to this one great important truth, they lose confidence in their ministers and the Church, and, being influenced by a wrong spirit, Satan takes the advantage of them, and drives them to the extreme of error and delusion. This I believe to be the true history of many of the most pious members of the Calvinistic churches. On the contrary, Methodists are very much secured against these errors. They are taught that Jesus Christ is a Savior from all sin in this world. And when they inquire for deliverance, they are pointed to Jesus Christ, as a present and all-sufficient Redeemer. Finding sympathy and instruction, on this great and agonizing point, their confidence in their ministers and their brethren, remains and they walk quietly with them.

And here let me say, that it is my full conviction, that there are but two ways in which ministers of the present day can prevent members of their churches from becoming perfectionists. One is, to suffer them to live so far from God, that they will not inquire after holiness of heart; and the other is, most fully to inculcate the glorious doctrine, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and that it is the high privilege and the duty of Christians, to live in a state of entire consecration to God.

It seems to me impossible that the tendency of this doctrine should be to the peculiar errors of the modern perfectionists, and yet not an instance occur among all the Methodist ministers, or the thousands of their members, for one hundred years.

I can say, from my own experience, that since I have understood and fully taught the doctrine as I now hold it, I see no tendency among those who listen to my instructions to these errors, while in churches not far distant, where the doctrine which we inculcate here is opposed, there seems to be a constant tendency, among their most pious people to Antinomian perfectionism. How can this be accounted for on any other principle than the one above stated? I can truly say that those persons here, who have been the first to lay hold of the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, and who give the highest evidence of enjoying this blessing, have been at the farthest remove from the errors of the modern perfectionists. I might state a great many facts upon this subject, but for the sake of brevity I omit them.

But aside from the facts, what is the foundation of all the errors of the modern perfectionists? Every one who has examined them knows that they may be summed up in this, the abrogation of the moral law. And now I would humbly inquire, what possible tendency can there be to their errors, if the moral law be preserved in the system of truth? In these days a man is culpably ignorant of that class of people, who does not know that the 'head and front of their offending,' and falling, is the setting aside the law of God. The setting aside the Christian ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, proceeds upon the same foundation, and manifestly grows out of the abrogation of the law of God. But retain the law of God, as the Methodists have done, and as other denominations have done, who from the days of the Reformation have maintained this same doctrine, and there is certainly no tendency to Antinomian perfectionism.

I have many things to say upon the tendency of this doctrine, but at present this must suffice.

By some it is said to be identical with Perfectionism; and attempts are made to show in what particulars Antinomian Perfectionism and our views are the same. On this I remark:

- o (1.) It seems to have been a favorite policy of certain controversial writers for a long time, instead of meeting a proposition in the open field of fair and Christian argument, to give it a bad name, and attempt to put it down, not by force of argument, but by showing that it is identical with or sustains a near relation to Pelagianism, Antinomianism, Calvinism, or some other ism, against which certain classes of minds are deeply prejudiced. In the recent controversy between what is called Old and New School Divinity, who has not witnessed with pain the frequent attempts that have been made to put down the New School Divinity, as it is called, by calling it Pelagianism, and quoting certain passages from Pelagius, and other writers, to show the identity of sentiment that exists between them.

This is a very unsatisfactory method of attaching or defending any doctrine. There are, no doubt, many points of agreement between Pelagius and all other orthodox divines, and so there are many points of disagreement between them. There are also many points of agreement between modern Perfectionists and all Evangelical Christians, and so there are many points of disagreement between them and the Christian Church in general. That there

are some points of agreement between their views and my own, is no doubt true. And that we totally disagree in regard to those points that constitute their great peculiarities, is, if I understand them, also true.

But did I really agree in all points with Augustine, or Edwards, or Pelagius, or the modern Perfectionists, neither the good or the ill name of any of these would prove my sentiments to be either right or wrong. It would remain after all, to show that those with whom I agreed were either right or wrong, in order, on the one hand, to establish that for which I contend, or on the other to condemn that which I maintain. It is often more convenient to give a doctrine or an argument a bad name, than it is soberly and satisfactorily to reply to it.

- (2.) It is not a little curious, that we should be charged with holding the same sentiments with the Perfectionists; and yet they seem to be more violently opposed to our views, since they have come to understand them, than almost any other persons whatever. I have been informed by one of their leaders, that he regards me as one of the master builders of Babylon. And I also understand, that they manifest greater hostility to the Oberlin Evangelist than almost any other class of persons.
- (3.) I will not take time, nor is it needful to go into an investigation or a denial even of the supposed or alleged points of agreement between us and the Perfectionists. But for the present it must be sufficient to request you to read and examine for yourselves.

With respect to the modern Perfectionists, those who have been acquainted with their writings, know that some of them have gone much further from the truth than others. Some of their leading men, who commenced with them and adopted their name, stopped far short of adopting some of their most abominable errors; still maintaining the authority and perpetual obligation of the moral law, and thus have been saved from going into many of the most objectionable and destructive notions of that sect. There are many more points of agreement between that class of Perfectionists and the orthodox Church, than between any other class of them and the Christian Church. And there are still a number of important points of difference, as every one knows who is possessed of correct information upon this subject.

I abhor the idea of denouncing any class of men as altogether and utterly wrong. I am well aware that there are many of those who are termed Perfectionists, who as truly abhor the extremes of error into which many of that name have fallen, as perhaps do any persons living.

- 7. Another objection is, that persons could not live in this world, if they were entirely sanctified. Strange! Does holiness injure a man? Does perfect conformity to all the laws of life and health, both physical and moral, render it impossible for a man to live? If a man break off from rebellion against God, will it kill him? Does there appear to have been any thing in Christ's holiness, inconsistent with life and health? The fact is, that this objection is founded in a gross

mistake in regard to what constitutes entire sanctification. It is supposed by those who hold this objection, that this state implies a continual and most intense degree of excitement, and many of those things which I have shown in my first lecture, are not at all implied in it. I have thought, that it is rather a glorified than a sanctified state, that most men have before their minds whenever they consider this subject. When Christ was upon earth, He was in a sanctified but not a glorified state. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." Now what is there in the moral character of Jesus Christ, as represented in His history, aside from His miraculous powers, that may not and ought not to be fully copied into the life of every Christian? I speak not of His knowledge, but of His spirit and temper. Ponder well every circumstance of His life that has come down to us, and say, beloved, what is there in it, that may not, by the grace of God, be copied into your own. And think you, that a full imitation of Him in all that relates to His moral character would render it impossible for you to live in this world?

- 8. Again, it is objected against our professing a state of entire sanctification, on the ground that it not only implies present obedience to the law of God, but such a formation and perfection of holy habits, as to render it certain that we shall never again sin. And that a man can no more tell when he is entirely sanctified, than he can tell how many holy acts it will take to form holy habits of such strength that he will never again sin. To this I answer:
 - (1.) The law of God has nothing to do with requiring this formation of holy habits. It is satisfied with present obedience, and only demands at every present moment, the full devotion of all our powers to God. It never, in any instance, complains that we have not formed such holy habits that we shall sin no more.
 - (2.) If it be true that a man is not entirely sanctified until his holy habits are so fixed, as to render it certain that he will never sin again, then Adam was not in a state of entire sanctification previously to the fall, nor were the angels in this state before their fall.
 - (3.) If this objection be true, there is not a saint nor an angel in heaven, so far as we can know, that can, with the least propriety profess a state of entire sanctification; for how can they know that they have performed so many holy acts, as to have created such habits of holiness as to render it certain that they will never sin again.
 - (4.) Entire sanctification does not depend upon the formation of holy habits, nor at all consist in this. But both entire and permanent sanctification are based alone upon the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Perseverance in holiness is to be ascribed entirely to the influence of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, both now and to the end of our lives, instead of being secured at all by any habits of holiness which we may or ever shall have formed.
- 9. Another objection is, that the doctrine tends to spiritual pride. And is it true indeed that to become perfectly humble tends to pride? But entire humility is implied in entire sanctification. Is it true that you must remain in sin, and of course cherish pride in order to avoid pride? Is your humility more safe in your own hands, and are you more secure against spiritual pride in refusing to receive Christ as your helper, than you would be at once to embrace Him as a full Savior?

- 10. Again it is objected that many who have embraced this doctrine, really are spiritually proud. To this I answer:
 - (1.) So have many who believed the doctrine of regeneration been deceived and amazingly puffed up with the idea that they have been regenerated, when they have not. But is this a good reason for abandoning the doctrine of regeneration, or any reason why the doctrine should not be preached?
 - (2.) Let me inquire, whether a simple declaration of what God has done for their souls, has not been assumed as itself sufficient evidence of spiritual pride on the part of those who embraced this doctrine, while there was in reality no spiritual pride at all? It seems next to impossible, with the present views of the Church, that an individual should really attain this state, and profess it in a manner so humble as not of course to be suspected of enormous spiritual pride? This consideration has been a snare to some who have hesitated and even neglected to declare what God had done for their souls, lest they should be accused of spiritual pride. And this has been a serious injury to their piety.
- 11. But again it is objected that this doctrine tends to censoriousness. To this I reply:
 - (1.) It is not denied that some who have professed to believe this doctrine have become censorious. But this no more condemns this doctrine than it condemns that of regeneration. And that it tends to censoriousness, might just as well be urged against every doctrine of the Bible as against this doctrine.
 - (2.) Let any Christian do his whole duty to the Church and the world in their present state--let him speak to them and of them as they really are, and he would of course incur the charge of censoriousness. It is therefore the most unreasonable thing in the world to suppose that the Church, in its present state, should not accuse any perfect Christian of censoriousness. Entire sanctification implies the doing of all our duty. But to do all our duty, we must rebuke sin in high places and in low places. Can this be done with all needed severity, without in many cases giving offence, and incurring the charge of censoriousness? No; it is impossible; and to maintain the contrary, would be to impeach the wisdom and holiness of Jesus Christ Himself.
- 12. It is objected that this doctrine lowers the standard of holiness to a level with our own experience. It is not denied that in some instances this may have been true. Nor can it be denied, that the standard of Christian perfection has been elevated much above the demands of the law, in its application to human beings in our present state of existence. It seems to have been forgotten, that the inquiry is, what does the law demand?--not of angels, and what would be entire sanctification in them; nor of Adam, previously to the fall, when his powers of body and mind were all in a state of perfect health; not what will the law demand of us in a future state of existence; not what the law may demand of the Church in some future period of its history on earth, when the human constitution, by the universal prevalence of correct and thorough temperance principles, may have acquired its pristine health and powers;--but the question is,

what does the law of God require of Christians of the present generation; of Christians in all respects in our circumstances, with all the ignorance and debility of body and mind which have resulted from the intemperance and abuse of the human constitution through so many generations?

The law levels its claims to us as we are, and a just exposition of it, as I have already said, under all the present circumstances of our being, is indispensable to a right apprehension of what constitutes entire sanctification.

To be sure, there may be danger of frittering away the claims of the law and letting down the standard. But I would humbly inquire whether, hitherto, the error has not been on the other side, and whether as a general fact, the law has not been so interpreted as naturally to beget the idea so prevalent, that if a man should become holy he could not live in this world? In a letter lately received from a beloved, and useful, and venerated minister of the gospel, while the writer expressed the greatest attachment to the doctrine of entire consecration to God, and said that he preached the same doctrine which we hold to his people every Sabbath, but by another name, still he added that it was revolting to his feelings, to hear any mere man set up the claim of obedience to the law of God. Now let me inquire, why should this be revolting to the feelings of piety? Must it not be because the law of God is supposed to require something of human beings in our state, which it does not and cannot require? Why should such a claim be thought extravagant, unless the claims of the living God be thought extravagant? If the law of God really requires no more of men than what is reasonable and possible, why should it be revolting to any mind to hear an individual profess, through the grace of God, to have attained that state? I know that the brother to whom I allude, would be almost the last man deliberately and knowingly to give any strained interpretation to the law of God; and yet, I cannot but feel that much of the difficulty that good men have upon this subject, has arisen out of a comparison of the lives of saints with a standard entirely above that which the law of God does or can demand of persons in all respects in our circumstances.

- 13. Another objection is, that as a matter of fact the grace of God is not sufficient to secure the entire sanctification of saints in this life. It is maintained, that the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, resolves itself after all into the question, whether the Church is, and Christians are sanctified in this life. The objectors say that nothing is sufficient grace that does not as a matter of fact, secure the faith and obedience and perfection of the saints; and, therefore, that the provisions of the gospel are in fact to be measured by the results; and that the experience of the Church decides both the meaning of the promises and the provisions of grace. Now to this I answer:

If this objection be good for any thing in regard to entire sanctification, it is equally true in regard to the spiritual state of every person in the world. If the fact that men are not perfect, proves that no provisions are made for their perfection, their being no better than they are proves that there is no provision for their being any better than they are, or that they might have aimed at being any better, with any rational hope of success. But who, except a fatalist, will admit any such conclusion as this? And yet I do not see but this conclusion is inevitable from such premises.

- 14. Another objection to this doctrine is, that it is contrary to the views of some of the greatest and best men in the Church,--that such men as Augustine, Calvin, Doddridge, Edwards, &c., were of a different opinion. To this I answer:
 - (1.) Suppose they were;--we are to call no man father in such a sense as to yield up to him the forming of our views of Christian doctrine.
 - (2.) This objection comes with a very ill grace from those who wholly reject their opinions on some of the most important points of Christian doctrine.
 - (3.) Those men all held the doctrine of physical depravity, which was manifestly the ground of their rejecting the doctrine of entire consecration to God in this life. Maintaining as they seem to have done, that the constitutional susceptibilities of body and mind were depraved and sinful, consistency of course led them to reject the idea that persons could be entirely sanctified while in the body. Now I would ask what consistency is there in quoting them as rejecting the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, while the reason of this rejection in their minds, was founded on the doctrine of physical depravity, which notion is entirely denied by those who quote their authority?
- 15. But again it is objected, that if we should attain this state of entire consecration of sanctification, we could not know it until the day of Judgment, and that to maintain its attainability is vain, inasmuch as no one can know whether he has attained it or not. To this I reply:
 - (1.) A man's consciousness is the highest and best evidence of the present state of his own mind. I understand consciousness to be the mind's recognition of its own states, and that it is the highest possible evidence to our own minds of what passes in our minds.
 - (2.) With the law of God before us as our standard, the testimony of consciousness in regard to whether the mind is conformed to that standard or not, is the highest evidence which the mind can have of a present state of conformity to that rule.
 - (3.) It is a testimony which we cannot doubt any more than we can doubt our existence. How do we know that we exist? I answer: by our consciousness. How do I know that I breathe, or love, or hate, or sit, or stand, or lie down, or rise up--that I am joyful or sorrowful--in short, that I exercise any emotion or volition, or affection of mind--how do I know that I sin, or repent, or believe? I answer: by my own consciousness. No testimony can be "so direct and convincing as this."

Now in order to know that my repentance is genuine, I must intellectually understand what genuine repentance is. So if I would know whether my love to God or man, or obedience to the law is genuine, I must have clearly before my mind the real spirit, and meaning, and bearing of the law of God. Having this rule before my mind, my own consciousness affords "the most direct and convincing evidence possible" of whether my present state of mind is conformed to the rule. The Spirit of God is never employed in testifying to

what my consciousness teaches, but in setting in a strong light before the mind the rule to which I am to conform my life. It is His business to make me understand, to induce me to love and obey the truth; and it is the business of consciousness to testify to my own mind, whether I do or do not obey the truth when I apprehend it. A man may be mistaken in regard to the correctness of his knowledge of the law or truth of God. He may therefore mistake the character of his exercises. But when God so presents the truth as to give the mind assurance, that it understands His mind and will upon any subject, the mind's consciousness of its own exercises in view of that truth, is "the highest and most direct possible" evidence of whether it obeys or disobeys.

- (4.) If a man cannot be conscious of the character of his own exercises, how can he know when and of what he is to repent? If he has committed sin of which he is not conscious, how is he to repent of it? And if he has a holiness of which he is not conscious, how could he feel that he has peace with God?

But it is said a man may violate the law not knowing it, and consequently have no consciousness that he sinned, but that afterwards a knowledge of the law may convict him of sin. To this I reply, that if there was absolutely no knowledge that the thing in question was wrong, the doing of that thing was not sin, inasmuch as some degree of knowledge of what is right or wrong is indispensable to the moral character of any act. In such a case there may be a sinful ignorance which may involve all the guilt of those actions that were done in consequence of it; but that blame-worthiness lies in the ignorance itself, and not at all in the violation of the rule of which the mind was at the time entirely ignorant.

- (5.) The Bible every where assumes, that we are able to know, and unqualifiedly requires us to know what the moral state of our mind is. It commands us to examine ourselves, to know and to approve our own selves. Now how can this be done but by bringing our hearts into the light of the law of God, and then taking the testimony of our own consciousness, whether we are or are not in a state of conformity to the law? But if we are not to receive the testimony of our consciousness in regard to our sanctification, are we to receive it in respect to our repentance or any other exercise of our mind whatever? The fact is that we may deceive ourselves, by neglecting to compare ourselves with the right standard. But when our views of the standard are right, and our consciousness is a felt, decided, unequivocal state of mind, we cannot be deceived any more than we can be deceived in regard to our own existence.
- (6.) But it is said our consciousness does not teach us what the power and capacities of our minds are, and that therefore, if consciousness could teach us in respect to the kind of our exercises, it cannot teach us in regard to their degree, whether it is equal to the present capability of our mind. To this I reply:
 - (a) Consciousness does as unequivocally testify whether we do or do not love God

with all our heart, as it does whether we love Him at all. How does a man know that he lifts as much as he can, or runs, or leaps, or walks as fast as he is able? I answer: by his own consciousness. How does he know that he repents or loves with all his heart? I answer: by his own consciousness. This is the only possible way in which he can know it.

- (b) The objection implies that God has put within our reach no possible means of knowing whether we obey Him or not. The Bible does not directly reveal the fact to any man, whether he obeys God or not. It reveals his duty, but does not reveal the fact whether he obeys. It refers this testimony to his own consciousness. The Spirit of God sets our duty before us, but does not directly reveal to us whether we do it or not; for this would imply that every man is under constant inspiration.

But it is said the Bible directs our attention to the fact of whether we obey or disobey as evidence whether we are in a right state of mind or not. But I would inquire, how do we know whether we obey or disobey? How do we know any thing of our conduct but by our consciousness? Our conduct as observed by others is to them evidence of the state of our hearts. But, I repeat it, our consciousness of obedience to God, is the highest and indeed the only evidence of our true character.

- (c) If a man's own consciousness is not to be a witness, either for or against him, no other testimony in the universe can ever satisfy him of the propriety of God's dealing with him in the final Judgment. Let then thousand witnesses testify that a man had committed murder, still the man could not feel condemned for it unless his own consciousness bore testimony to the fact. So if ten thousand witnesses should testify that he had performed some good act, he could feel no self-complacency, or sense of self-approbation and virtue, unless his consciousness bore its testimony to the same fact. There are cases of common occurrence, where the witnesses testify to the guilt or innocence of a man contrary to the testimony of his own consciousness. When God convicts a man of sin, it is not by contradicting his consciousness; but by setting the consciousness which he had at the time in the clear strong light of his memory, causing him to discover clearly, and to remember distinctly, what light he had, what thoughts, what convictions; in other words, what consciousnesses he had at the time. And this, let me add, is the way and the only way in which the Spirit of God can convict a man of sin, thus bringing him to condemn himself. Now suppose that God should bear testimony against a man, that at such a time he did such a thing--that such and such were all the circumstances of the case--and suppose that, at the same time, the individual is unable to remember, and appears never to have had the least consciousness of the transaction. The testimony of God in this case, could not satisfy the man's mind, or lead him into a state of self-condemnation. The only possible way in which this state of mind could be induced, would be to arouse the memory of past consciousness, and cause the whole scene to start into living reality before his mind's eye, as it passed in his own consciousness at the time. But if he had no consciousness of any such thing, and

consequently no remembrance of it could possibly take place, to convict him of sin is naturally and for ever impossible.

- o (7.) Men may overlook what consciousness is. They may mistake the rule of duty--they may confound consciousness with a mere negative state of mind, or that state in which a man is not conscious of a state of opposition to the truth. Yet it must for ever remain true, that to our own minds "consciousness must be the highest possible evidence" of what passes within us. And if a man does not by his own consciousness know whether he does the best that he can, under the circumstances--whether he has a single eye to the glory of God--and whether he is in a state of entire consecration to God--he cannot know it in any way whatever. And no testimony whatever, either of God or man, could, according to the laws of his being, satisfy him, and beget in him either conviction of guilt on the one hand, or self-approbation on the other.
- o (8.) Finally, let me ask, how those who make this objection know that they are not in a sanctified state? Has God revealed it to them? Has He revealed it in the Bible? Does the Bible say to A.B., by name, you are not in a sanctified state? Or does it lay down a rule, in the light of which his own consciousness bears this testimony against him? Has God revealed directly by His Spirit, that he is not in a sanctified state? Or does He hold the rule of duty strongly before the mind, and thus awaken the testimony of consciousness, that he is not in this state?

Now just in the same way, consciousness testifies of those that are sanctified, that they are in that state. Neither the Bible, nor the Spirit of God, makes any new or particular revelation to them by name. But the Spirit of God bears witness with their spirits, by setting the rule in a strong light before them. He induces that state of mind that consciousness pronounces to be conformity to the rule. This is as far as possible from setting aside the judgment of God in the case, for consciousness is, under these circumstances, the testimony of God, and the way in which He convinces of sin on the one hand, and of entire consecration on the other.

Again, the objection that consciousness cannot decide in regard to the strength of our powers, and whether we really serve God with all our strength, seems to be based upon the false supposition that the law of God requires every power of body and mind to be excited at every moment to its full strength, and that too without any regard to the nature of the subject about which our powers are for the time being employed. In the first lecture on this subject, I endeavored to show and trust I did show, that perfect obedience to the law of God requires no such thing. Entire sanctification is entire consecration. Entire consecration is obedience to the law of God. And all that the law requires is, that our whole being be consecrated to God, and that the amount of strength to be expended in His service at any one moment of time, must depend upon the nature of the subject about which the powers are for the time being employed. And nothing is further from the truth than that obedience to the law of God requires every power of body and mind to

be constantly on the strain, and in the highest possible degree of excitement, and activity. Such an interpretation of the law of God as this, would be utterly inconsistent with life and health; and would write MENE, TEKEL upon the life and conduct of Jesus Christ Himself; for His whole history shows that He was not in a state of constant excitement to the full extent of His powers.

- 16. Again it is objected that, if this state were attained in this life, it would be the end of our probation. Probation, since the fall of Adam, or those points in which we are in a state of probation or trial, are:
 - (1.) Whether we will repent and believe the gospel;
 - (2.) Whether we will persevere in holiness to the end of life.

Some suppose that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, sets aside the idea of being at all in a state of probation after our conversion. They reason thus: If it is certain that the saints will persevere, then their probation is ended; because the question is already settled, not only that they will be converted, but that they will persevere to the end, and the contingency in regard to the event, is indispensable to the idea of probation. To this I reply:

That a thing may be contingent with man that is not at all so with God. With God, there is not and never was any contingency, with regard to the final destiny of any being. But with men, almost all things are contingencies. God knows with absolute certainty whether a man will be converted, and whether he will persevere. A man may know that he is converted, and may believe, that by the grace of God he shall persevere. He may have an assurance of this in proportion to the strength of his faith. But the knowledge of this fact is not at all inconsistent with the idea of his continuance in a state of trial till the day of his death; inasmuch as his perseverance depends upon the exercise of his own voluntary agency.

In the same way some say, that if we have attained a state of entire and permanent sanctification, we can no longer be in a state of probation. I answer, that perseverance in this state depends upon the promise and grace of God, just as the final perseverance of the saints does. In neither case can we have any other assurance of our perseverance than that of faith in the promise and grace of God; nor any other knowledge that we have arrived at this state, than that which arises out of a belief in the testimony of God, that He will preserve us blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this be inconsistent with our probation, I see not why the doctrine of the saints' perseverance is not equally inconsistent with it. If any one is disposed to maintain that for us to have any judgment or belief in regard to our final perseverance, is inconsistent with a state of probation, all I can say is, that his views of probation are very inconsistent with my own, and so far as I

understand, with those of the Church of God.

Again, there is a very high and important sense in which every moral being will remain on probation to all eternity. While under the moral government of God, obedience must for ever remain a condition of the favor of God. And the fact of continued obedience will for ever depend on the faithfulness and grace of God; and the only knowledge we can ever have of this fact, either in heaven or on earth, must be founded upon the faithfulness and truth of God.

Again, if it were true, that entering upon a state of permanent sanctification in this life, were, in some sense, an end of our probation, that would be no objection to the doctrine; for there is a sense in which probation often ends long before the termination of this life. Where, for example, a person has committed the unpardonable sin, or where from any cause, God has given up sinners to fill up the measure of their iniquity, withdrawing for ever His Holy Spirit from them, and sealed them over to eternal death; this, in a very important sense, is the end of their probation, and they are as sure of hell as if they were already there.

So on the other hand, when a person has received, after that he believes, the ensembling of the Spirit unto the day of redemption, as an earnest of his inheritance, he may and is bound to regard this as a solemn pledge on the part of God, of his final perseverance and salvation, and as no longer leaving the final question of his destiny in doubt.

Now it should be remembered, that in both these cases the result depends upon the exercise of the agency of the creature. In the case of the sinner given up of God, it is certain that he will not repent, though his impenitence is voluntary and by no means a thing naturally necessary. So on the other hand the perseverance of the saints is certain though not necessary. If in either case there should be a radical change of character the result would differ accordingly.

- 17. Again, while it is admitted by some that entire sanctification in this life is attainable, yet it is denied that there is any certainty that it will be attained by any one before death. For, it is said, that as all the promises of entire sanctification are conditioned upon faith, they therefore secure the entire sanctification of no one. To this I reply:

That all the promises of salvation in the Bible are conditioned upon faith and repentance, and therefore it does not follow on this principle, that any person ever will be saved. What does all this arguing prove? The fact is that while the promises both of salvation and sanctification, are conditioned upon faith as it respects individuals; yet to Christ and to the Church as a body, as I have already shown, these promises are unconditional. With respect to the salvation of sinners, it is promised that Christ shall have a seed to serve Him, and the Bible abounds with numerous promises, both to Christ and the Church, that secure without condition, as it regards them, the salvation of great multitudes of sinners.

So the promises that the Church as a body, at some period of her earthly history, shall be entirely sanctified, are, as it regards the Church, unconditional. But, as I have already shown, as it respects individuals, the fulfillment of these promises must depend upon the exercise of faith. Both in the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of Christians, God is abundantly pledged to bring about the salvation of the one and the sanctification of the other, to the extent of His promises. But as it respects individuals, no one can claim the fulfillment of these promises without complying with the conditions.

These are the principal objections that have occurred to my mind, or that have, so far as I know, been urged by others. There may be and doubtless are others, of greater or less plausibility, to which I may have occasion to refer hereafter. Lest I should be tedious, these must suffice for the present.

LECTURE VIII.

April 8, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 8

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

VIII. I am next to show when entire sanctification is attainable.

- 1. The blessing of entire sanctification is promised to Christians. The promises in--

Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Ezek. 36:25-27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

1 Thess. 5:23, 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

Eph. 1:13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

These and many others show that the promise is made to those who have some degree of faith, i.e. who have been regenerated. In the last it is said, "We are sealed after that we believe."

- 2. Faith is always the expressed or implied condition of the promises. It has been supposed that the promise in Jer. 31, together with other kindred promises, are absolute in such a sense as to have no condition whatever. To this it may be replied, that the things which they promise are of such a nature as that they cannot possibly be received but by faith. The law of love cannot possibly be written in the heart, but through the faith which works by love. Therefore from necessity this promise, as well as all other promises of spiritual blessings, is conditioned upon faith in us. Should it be said that the promise to write the law in our hearts, includes the doing of all that which is essential to its fulfillment, and that therefore a promise to beget love is virtually also a promise to produce faith, I reply, that in some sense this is true. A promise to secure an end is virtually a promise to secure the right use of the means necessary to that end. But this is as far as possible from excluding our own agency and responsibility. When Paul had declared, that not a hair of any man's head on board the ship should perish, this did not exclude the necessity of the sailors remaining on board. For he afterwards informed them, "except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." Now it is true that in a very important sense, the promise that the hair of no man's head should perish, implied that God would secure the use of the requisite means to preserve them. Yet who would infer from this that that promise was not conditioned upon the sailors remaining on board, and the right use of the voluntary agency of Paul and all the rest on board to preserve themselves. So it should be remembered, that the promises, to create a new heart and a new spirit--to make a new covenant with the house of Israel--and to write the law in their hearts--are certainly and necessarily conditioned upon the faith of every one who would receive their fulfillment.
- 3. This state is attainable on the ground of natural ability at any time. If this state were not attainable on the ground of natural ability, it would not be required, and its absence would not be sin. But it has been doubted whether the work of entire sanctification is such, in its own nature, that it can be accomplished at once. To this I reply:
 - (1.) If it cannot be instantly accomplished, it would not be instantly required.
 - (2.) If it were not, in its own nature, capable of being attained at once, the non-attaining it at once would not be sin. All that would be required would be to press forward as fast as we could.

- (3.) But in this case the pressing forward would be a sinless state, because it would be all that could be required. So that we should possess at once, what according to the supposition, is naturally impossible, i.e. a state of entire sanctification.
- (4.) I have already shown that provision is made against every temptation. And as temptation, under some form, is the cause of all sin, if sufficient provision is made against all present and future temptation, it follows that a state of entire sanctification is attainable at once.
- 4. Full faith in the word and promises of God, naturally, and certainly, and immediately produces a state of entire sanctification. Let it be understood that by faith, I mean--
 - (1.) A realization of the truth and meaning of the Bible.
 - (2.) A laying hold upon all those truths upon which this state of mind depends, especially a full realization and belief of the sacred record God has given of His Son, "that his blood cleanseth us from all sin." It is easy to see that the realization and belief of the infinite love of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus, would have a tendency to fill the mind with unutterable and constant love to God--to annihilate selfishness--and beget the most cordial and perfect love to man. This result is instantaneous on the exercise of faith, and in this sense sanctification is an instantaneous work.
- 5. God is able to produce entire sanctification in any soul, when he is pleased to do so.

This appears to be plainly taught by Christ, when he spoke of the ability of God to save the rich. He asserts that their salvation is more difficult "than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." And when the disciples expressed their astonishment, He replied, that "with God all things are possible." Now this seems to be a case in point. To sanctify the rich is the only difficulty in the way of their salvation. And Christ has asserted, that God is able not only to sanctify them, but that "all things are possible with Him," i.e. that there is no limit to His ability in this respect.

Eph. 3:20, proved the same point. Here the Apostle asserts that God is able to do "abundantly above all that we ask and above all that we think," exceedingly abundantly, &c. Now we can both think of and ask for the blessing of entire, and permanent, and instantaneous sanctification, and if this passage of scripture is true God is able to grant it.

That God is able not only to produce present but also to confirm us in a state of perpetual sanctification, is plain from many other passages of scripture. Jude 24: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Upon this passage, I remark:

- (1.) Here it is asserted, that God is able to keep us from falling.
- (2.) To present us faultless before the presence of His glory.

- (3.) To keep us and present us faultless, is to preserve us in a state of permanent sanctification. And this it is declared He is able to do.

To this it has been objected that moral government implies the power to resist every degree of motive. This I most fully admit. But it is one thing to have the power thus to resist, and quite another thing to use that power. God certainly knew when he created moral agents to what extent, under their circumstances, they would actually exercise their powers of resistance, and therefore whether He could sanctify and save them or not. As a matter of fact, He has overcome the voluntary resistance of all who are converted. And if He has broken down their enmity, and so far subdued them, is it incredible that He should be able wholly to sanctify them, and preserve them blameless?

IX. I am to show how entire sanctification is attainable.

- 1. A state of entire sanctification can never be attained by an indifferent waiting God's time.
- 2. Nor by any works of law, or works of any kind performed in your own strength, irrespective of the grace of God. By this I do not mean that were you disposed to exert your natural powers aright, you could not at once attain to this state in the exercise of your natural strength. But I do mean, that as you are wholly indisposed to use your natural powers aright without the grace of God, no efforts that you will actually make in your own strength or independent of his grace, will ever result in your entire sanctification.
- 3. Not by any direct efforts to feel right. Many spend their time in vain efforts to force themselves into a right state of feeling. Now it should be for ever understood, that neither faith, love, nor repentance, nor any other right feeling is ever the result of a direct effort to put forth those exercises. But on the contrary, they are the spontaneous actings of the mind when it has under its direct and deep consideration the objects of faith, and love, and repentance. By spontaneous, I do not mean involuntary. They are the voluntary and the most easy & natural states of mind possible under such circumstances. So far from its requiring an effort to put them forth, it would rather require an effort to prevent them, when the mind is intensely considering those objects & considerations which have a natural tendency to produce them. This is so true that when persons are in the exercise of such affections, they feel no difficulty at all in their exercise, but wonder how any one can help feeling as they do. It seems to them so natural, so easy, and I may say, so almost unavoidable, that they often feel and express astonishment that any one should find it difficult to love, believe, or repent. The course that many persons take on the subject of religion has often appeared wonderful to me. They make themselves, their own state and interests, the central point, around which their own minds are continually revolving. Their selfishness is so great, that their own interests, happiness, and salvation, fill their whole field of vision. And with their thoughts and anxieties, and whole souls clustering around their own salvation, they complain of a hard heart--that they cannot love God--that they do not repent, and cannot believe. Being conscious that they do not feel right, they are the most concerned about themselves, which concern but increases their embarrassment and the difficulty of exercising right affections. The deeper they feel the more they try to feel--the greater efforts they make to feel without success, the more they are alarmed and discouraged, the more are they confirmed in their selfishness, and the more are their thoughts glued to their

own interests, and they are of course at a greater and greater distance from any right state of feeling. And thus their selfish anxieties beget ineffectual efforts, and ineffectual efforts but deepen their anxieties. And if in this state, death should appear in a visible form before them, or the last trumpet sound, and they should be summoned to the solemn Judgment, it would but increase their distraction, confirm and almost give omnipotence to their selfishness, and render their sanctification morally impossible.

- 4. Not by any efforts to obtain grace by works. In my lecture on Faith, in the last volume of the Evangelist, I said the following things:
 - (1.) Should the question be proposed to a Jew, "What shall I do that I may work the works of God?"--in other words, how shall I obtain a state of entire obedience to the law of God, or entire sanctification?--he would answer, keep the law, both moral and ceremonial, i.e. keep the commandments.
 - (2.) To the same inquiry an Arminian would answer, improve common grace, and you will obtain converting grace, i.e. use the means of grace, according to the best light you have, and you will obtain the grace of salvation. In this answer it is not supposed, that the inquirer already has faith, and is using the means of grace in faith; but that he is in a state of impenitency, and is inquiring after converting grace. The answer, therefore, amounts to this: you must get converting grace by your impenitent works; you must become holy by your hypocrisy; you must work out sanctification by sin.
 - (3.) To this question, most professed Calvinists would make in substance the same reply. They would reject the language, while they retained the idea. Their direction would imply, either that the inquirer already has faith, or that he must perform some works to obtain it, i.e. to obtain grace by works.

Neither an Arminian, nor a Calvinist would formally direct the inquirer to the law, as the ground of justification. But nearly the whole Church would give directions that would amount to the same thing. Their answer would be a legal, and not a gospel answer. For whatever answer is given to this question, that does not distinctly recognize faith, as the foundation of all virtue in sinners, is legal. Unless the inquirer is made to understand, that this is the first, grand, fundamental duty, without the performance of which all virtue, all giving up of sin, all acceptable obedience, is impossible, he is misdirected. He is led to believe that it is possible to please God without faith; and to obtain grace by works of law. There are but two kinds of works--works of law, and works of faith. Now if the inquirer has not the "faith that works by love," to set him upon any course of works to get it, is certainly to get faith by works of the law. Whatever is said to him that does not clearly convey the truth, that both justification and sanctification are by faith, without works of law, is law, and not gospel. Nothing before, or without faith, can possibly be done by the unbeliever, but works of law. His first duty, therefore, is faith; and every attempt to obtain faith by unbelieving works, is to lay works at the foundation, and make grace a result. It is the direct opposite of gospel truth.

Take facts as they arise in every day's experience, to show that what I have stated is true

of almost all professors and non-professors. Whenever a sinner begins in good earnest to agitate the question, "what shall I do to be saved?" he resolves as a first duty, to break off from his sins, i.e. in unbelief. Of course, his reformation is only outward. He determines to do better--to reform in this, that, and the other thing, and thus prepare himself to be converted. He does not expect to be saved without grace, and faith, but he attempts to get grace by works of law.

The same is true of multitudes of anxious Christians, who are inquiring what they shall do to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. They overlook the facts, that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith," that it is with "the shield of faith" that they are "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." They ask why am I overcome by sin? why can I not get above its power? why am I thus the slave of my appetites and passions, and the sport of the devil? They cast about for the cause of all this spiritual wretchedness and death. At one time, they think they have discovered it in the neglect of one duty; and at another time, in the neglect of another. Sometimes, they imagine they have found the cause to lie in yielding to one sin, and sometimes in yielding to another. They put forth efforts in this direction, and in that direction, and patch up their righteousness on one side, while they make a rent in the other side. Thus they spend years, in running around in a circle, and making dams of sand across the current of their own corruptions. Instead of at once purifying their hearts by faith, they are engaged in trying to arrest the overflowing of its bitter waters. Why do I sin? they inquire; and casting about for the cause, they come to the sage conclusion, it is because I neglect such a duty, i.e. because I do sin. But how shall I get rid of sin? Answer: by doing my duty, that is, by ceasing from sin. Now the real inquiry is, why do they neglect their duty? Why do they commit sin at all? where is the foundation of all this mischief? Will it be replied, the foundation of all this wickedness is in the corruption of our nature--in the wickedness of the heart--in the strength of our evil propensities and habits? But all this only brings us back to the real inquiry again--How are this corrupt nature, this wicked heart, and these sinful habits, to be overcome? I answer, by faith alone. No works of law have the least tendency to overcome our sins; but rather confirm the soul in self-righteousness and unbelief.

The great and fundamental sin, which is at the foundation of all other sin, is unbelief. The first thing is, to give up that--to believe the word of God. There is no breaking off from one sin without this. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "Without faith, it is impossible to please God."

Thus we see, that the backslider and convicted sinner, when agonizing to overcome sin, will almost always betake themselves to works of law, to obtain faith. They will fast, and pray, and read, and struggle, and outwardly reform, and thus endeavor to obtain grace. Now all this is in vain and wrong. Do you ask, shall we not fast, and pray, and read, and struggle? Shall we do nothing--but sit down in Antinomian security and inaction? I answer, you must do all that God commands you to do; but begin where He tells you to begin, and do it in the manner in which He commands you to do it; i.e. in the exercise of that faith that works by love. Purify your hearts by faith. Believe in the Son of God. And

say not in your heart, "who shall ascend up into heaven, i.e. to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, i.e. to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach."

Now these facts show, that even under the gospel, almost all professors of religion, while they reject the Jewish notion of justification by works of the law, have after all adopted a ruinous substitute for it, and suppose that, in some way they are to obtain grace by their works.

- 5. A state of entire sanctification cannot be attained by attempting to copy the experience of others. It is very common for convicted sinners, or for Christians inquiring after entire sanctification, in their blindness to ask others to relate their experience, to mark minutely the detail of all their exercises, and then set themselves to pray for and make direct efforts to attain the same class of exercises. Not seeming to understand that they can no more exercise feelings in the detail like others, than they can look like others. Human experiences differ as human countenances differ. The whole history of a man's former state of mind, comes in of course to modify his present and future exercises. So that the precise train of affections which may be requisite in your case, and which will actually occur in your case, if you are ever sanctified, will not, in all their detail, coincide with the exercises of any other human being. It is of vast importance for you to understand, that you can be no copyist in any true religious experience; and that you are in great danger of being deceived by Satan, whenever you attempt to copy the experience of others. I beseech you, therefore to cease from praying for or trying to obtain the precise experience of any uninspired person, whatever. All truly Christian experiences are, like human countenances, in their outline, so much alike as to be readily known as the lineaments of the religion of Jesus Christ. But no farther than this are they alike, any more than human countenances are alike.
- 6. Not by waiting to make preparations before you come into this state. Observe that the thing about which you are inquiring is a state of entire consecration to God. Now do not imagine that this state of mind must be prefaced by a long introduction of preparatory exercises. It is common for persons when inquiring upon this subject with earnestness, to think themselves hindered in their progress by a want of this or that or the other exercise or state of mind. They look every where else but at the real difficulty. They assign any other and every other but the true reason for their not being already in a state of sanctification.
- 7. Not by attending meetings, asking the prayers of other Christians, or depending in any way upon the means of getting into this state. By this I do not intend to say that means are unnecessary, or that it is not through the instrumentality of truth, that this state of mind is induced. But I do mean that while you are depending upon any instrumentality whatever, your mind is directed from the real point before you, and you are never likely to make this attainment.
- 8. Not by waiting for any particular views of Christ. When persons, in the state of mind of which I have been speaking, hear those who live in faith, describe their views of Christ, they say, "O, if I had such views, I could believe; I must have these, before I can believe." Now you

should understand that these views are the result and effect of faith. These views of which you speak, are those which faith discovers in those passages of Scripture which describe Christ. Faith apprehends the meaning of those passages, and sees in them these very things which you expect to see, before you exercise faith, and which you imagine would produce it. Take hold, then, on the simple promise of God. Take God at His word. Believe that he means just what He says. And this will at once bring you into the state of mind, after which you inquire.

- 9. Not in any way which you may mark out for yourself. Persons in an inquiring state are very apt, without seeming to be aware of it, to send imagination on before them, to stake out the way, and set up a flag where they intend to come out. They expect to be thus and thus exercised--to have such and such peculiar views and feelings, when they have attained their object. Now there probably never was a person who did not find himself disappointed in these respects. God says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." This suffering your imagination to make out your path is a great hindrance to you, as it sets you upon making many fruitless, and worse than fruitless, attempts to attain this imaginary state of mind--wastes much of your time--exhausts much of the energies of your mind--and greatly wearies the patience and grieves the Spirit of God. While He is trying to lead you right to the point, you are hauling off from the course, and insisting that this which your imagination has marked out is the way, instead of that in which He is trying to lead you. And thus in your pride and ignorance you are causing much delay, and abusing the long suffering of God. He says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." But you say no. This is the way. And thus you stand and parley and banter, while you are every moment in danger of grieving the Spirit of God away from you, and of losing your soul.
- 10. Not in any manner, or at any time, or place, upon which you may in your own mind lay any stress. If there is any thing in your imagination that has fixed definitely upon any particular manner, time or place, or circumstances, you will in all probability either be deceived by the devil, or entirely disappointed in the result. You will find that in all these particular items on which you had laid any stress, that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God--that your ways are not His ways, not your thoughts His thoughts. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than your ways, and His thoughts than your thoughts. But,
- 11. This state is to be attained by faith alone. Let it be forever remembered, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," and "whatever is not of faith, is sin."

Both justification and sanctification are by faith alone. Rom. 3:30: "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;" and 5:1: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Also, 9:30, 31: "What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law."

That you may clearly understand this part of the subject, I will quote again from my lecture in

the last Vol. the elements that constitute saving faith.

- (1.) The first element of saving faith is a realizing sense of the truth of the Bible. But this is not alone saving faith, for Satan has this realizing sense of truth, which makes him tremble.
- (2.) But a second element in saving faith is the consent of the heart or will to the truth perceived by the intellect. It is a cordial trust or resting of the mind in those truths, and a yielding up of the whole being to their influence. Now it is easy to see, that without the consent of the will, these can be nothing but an outward obedience to God. A wife, without confidence in her husband, can do nothing more than perform outwardly her duty to him. It is a contradiction to say that without confidence, she can perform her duty from the heart. The same is true of parental and all other governments. Works of law may be performed without faith; i.e. we may serve from fear or hope, or some selfish consideration; but without the confidence that works by love, obedience from the heart is naturally impossible. Nay, the very terms, obedience from the heart without love, are a contradiction.
- (3.) This is the most simple and rational state of mind conceivable. It is that state of mind for which very young children are so remarkable. Before they have been taught to distrust by the experience of human depravity, they seem to know nothing of unbelief. They are so simple and honest, that they feel entire confidence in those around them. It is merely a trust in testimony, a resting of the heart in truths perceived by the intellect, a natural yielding of the voluntary powers to the testimony of God.
- (4.) This state of mind is spontaneous. It is not, as I have said, the result of an effort to believe, but the natural resting or reposing of the mind in the truth of God. And when the soul believes, all that it can say, is that "while I mused the fire burned," when I thought on the truth to be believed, ere I was aware, I found myself believing.--As I have already said, I do not mean that this is an involuntary state of mind, but that it is voluntary in so high a sense as not to be the result of effort, but the joyful, and natural, and easy yielding up the mind to the influence of truth.
- (5.) Faith discovers the real meaning, and apprehends the fulness of those passages that describe Christ. Faith therefore presents Christ to the mind not as at a distance, but as near, not as enveloped in clouds; but in those passages that describe Him, is beheld a fulness, and a glory, and a surpassing loveliness that overpowers and melts the soul.
- (6.) The truths to be believed, in order to induce this state of mind, are those which comprise "the record that God hath given of His Son." The mind needs to apprehend God in Christ. To be like God, we must know what He is. To be led to a spontaneous consecration of all to Him, our selfishness must be overcome by a knowledge of what God is. And this knowledge is to be obtained only by seeing God in Christ. For this very purpose God took to Himself human nature, that He might reveal Himself to the sons of men, and thus possess their minds of a true knowledge of His character.

- o (7.) The natural, and certain effect of their knowing God, is a state of entire consecration to Him. I have said that while individuals are taken up with contemplating themselves, their own characters, dangers, and troubles, they cannot be sanctified, because there is no tendency in such considerations to produce this state. They may dwell upon their own misery, or their wretchedness to all eternity, without finding it possible to consecrate themselves to God, for what is there in such considerations that can in any way produce such a result. It is a consideration of the infinite excellence of Christ's character, and this alone that can inspire faith or love. If, therefore, you ever expect to trust in God, and love Him with all your heart, you must acquaint yourselves with the reasons for thus loving and trusting Him. You must know God. You must have the true knowledge of God. God, and not yourselves, must be the object of your thoughts. Cease then, I beseech you, to expect to be sanctified by any works of your own, or any direct efforts to feel or do more or less, and remember "that faith cometh by hearing." In other words to understand and believe the record that God hath given of His Son, will at once give you an experimental acquaintance with the truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

The New and Old dispensations differ in two respects.

- (a) The New, is a fuller and more perfect revelation of Christ, or of those things that are indispensable to sanctification.
- (b) There is a vastly greater amount of the Holy Spirit's influences exerted under this dispensation. The Old made nothing perfect, because of the obscure nature of the revelation of Christ, and because there was such a want of divine influence as fully to possess the mind of the truths indispensable to sanctification. The mind must know enough of God to slay selfishness, and without this, neither love or sanctification is possible. The New, blessed be God, with the influences of the Holy Spirit, have brought us into the clear sunlight, and so revealed God as to overcome sin.

LECTURE IX.

April 22, 1840

SANCTIFICATION- No. 9

by the Rev. Charles G. Finney

Text.--1 Thess. 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

In concluding the series of discourses upon this text, I would remark:

- 1. That it is useless to speculate upon any supposed distinction that might have been in the

Apostle's mind between the soul and spirit of man. I understand the prayer of the Apostle to be for the entire consecration of the whole being to the service of God. I need not dwell with any more particularity upon the text, except it be to mention some things which I suppose are implied in the entire sanctification of the body.

- (1.) I understand the sanctification of the body to imply the entire consecration, by the soul, of all its members to the service of God. The body is to be regarded merely as the instrument of the soul through which it manifests itself, and by which it fulfills its desires.
- (2.) The entire sanctification of the body implies also the entire consecration of all its appetites and passions to the service of God, i.e. that all its appetites shall be used only for the purposes for which they were designed, not to be the masters, but the servants of the soul, not to lead the soul away from God, but to subserve the highest interests of the physical organization.
- (3.) It implies the necessity of keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection--that no appetite or passion of the body is to be indulged merely for the sake of the indulgence--that no appetite or passion is to be at any time consulted or its indulgence allowed but for the glory of God, to answer the ends of our being, and to render us in the highest degree useful. The grand error of mankind is, that the soul has been debased even to be the slave of the body, that appetite and passion have ruled, that the "fleshly mind which is enmity against God," has been suffered to become the law of the soul, and hence the Apostle complains that he saw "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death,; which was in his members. Hence also, it is said that "if ye live after the flesh ye shall die," that "to mind the flesh is enmity with God," that " the minding of the flesh is death," "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." In short it is every where in the Bible expressly taught, that one great error and sin of mankind is the indulgence of the flesh. Now the entire sanctification of the body implies the denial of the lusts of the flesh, that "we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof," that the appetites and passions be restrained and entirely subjugated to the highest interests and perfection of the soul, and to the glory of God. The highest sense in which the body may be sanctified in this life implies:
 - (a) The strictest temperance in all things. By temperance I mean the moderate use of things that are useful, and total abstinence from things that are pernicious.
 - (b) It implies also the utter denial of all the artificial appetites of the body. By artificial appetites I mean all those appetites that are not natural to man previous to all depravity of the system by any kind of abuse or violation of its laws. Among the artificial appetites are all those hankerings after various poisons, narcotics, and innutricious [sic.] stimulants that are in almost universal use, such as tobacco, tea, coffee, and the like. All such substances are utterly inconsistent with perfect temperance--are worse than useless, and produce only a temporary excitement, at the expense of certain and permanent debility. They deceive mankind on the same

principle that alcohol has so long deceived men, and though not to the same degree injurious and inconsistent with the highest well being of the body and soul; yet they are as really so; and therefore utterly unlawful. And nothing but ignorance, can prevent their use in any instance as an article of diet from being sin; and when the means of knowledge are at hand, this ignorance itself becomes sin.

- (c) Temperance implies a knowledge of, and compliance with, all the laws of our physical system. There is scarcely any branch of knowledge more important to mankind than a knowledge of the structure and laws of their own being. Nor is there scarcely any subject, upon which men are so generally and so shamefully ignorant. It seems not at all to be known by mankind in general, or even suspected, that everything about their bodies is regulated by laws, as certain as the law of gravitation; and that a perfect knowledge of and conformity of those laws, would render permanent health as certain as the motion of the planets. The world is full of disease and premature death, and these things are spoken of as mysterious providences of God, without ever so much as dreaming, that they are the natural and certain results of the most outrageous and reckless violations of the laws of the human constitution.

- (d) Temperance in all things implies correct dietetic and other habits in respect to exercise and rest. And in short, such obedience in all respects to the physiological laws of the constitution as to promote in the highest degree its physical perfection, and thus preserve it in a state in which it will be in the highest degree capable of being used by the soul, to fulfill all the will of God. There are no doubt, occasions on which the bodily strength and the body itself may be sanctified to the interests of the soul, and of the Redeemer's kingdom--cases in which the violation of physical law may be justifiable and even a duty, where the kingdom of Christ demands the sacrifice. Christ gave up His body a sacrifice. The Apostles and Martyrs gave up theirs. And in every age multitudes have given themselves up to labors for the kingdom of Christ, that have soon ended their mortal lives. This is not inconsistent with the highest instances of such consecration. But where the circumstances do not demand it, the sanctification of the body, implies that its strength shall not be exhausted, or any of its powers debilitated or injured, by any neglect of exercise, or by any overworking of its organs, or by any violation of its laws whatever. It implies the utmost regularity in all our habits of eating, drinking, sleeping, labor, rest, exercise, and in short a strictly religious regard to all those things that can contribute to our highest perfection of body and soul. Can a glutton, who is stupefied two or three times a day with his food, be entirely consecrated, either body or soul to God? Certainly not. His table is a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block to him. Can an epicure, whose dainty palate loathes every correctly prepared article of diet, and who demands that every meal should be prepared with seasonings and condiments highly injurious to the health of his body and the well-being of his soul, can he be in a state of entire consecration to God? No! surely. His "God is his belly." His "glory is in his shame." He "minds earthly things," and an Apostle would tell him, "even weeping, that his end is destruction."

It is appalling to see the various forms of disease and wretchedness with which mankind are cursed on account of their wanton disregard of the laws of their being. The highest power of the human mind can never be developed, nor its highest perfection attained, in a diseased body; and probably scarcely a single member of the human family in their present state, has any thing like perfect health. Many suppose themselves to be perfectly healthy, simply because they never saw a person who had perfect health, and also because they do not know enough of themselves to know that many of their organs may be fatally diseased without their being conscious of it.

The influence of dietetic and other habits upon the health of the body is known to but a very limited extent among mankind, and far less is it understood that whatever affects the body, inevitably affects the mind, and that the temper and spirit of a man are in a great measure modified by the state of his health. It is known to some extent that an acid stomach begets fretfulness, and that certain nervous diseases, as they are called, greatly affect the mind. But it is not so generally known as it ought to be, that all our dietetic and other physiological habits have a powerful influence in forming and molding our moral character. Not necessarily but by way of temptation, acting on the mind through our bodily organs, all stimulants and every thing injurious to the body act most perniciously upon the mind. Let me say therefore, beloved, in one word, as I cannot dwell upon this subject longer, that if you would expect the sanctification of body, soul, and spirit, you must acquaint yourselves with the true principles of temperance and physiological reform, and most religiously conform yourself to them not only in the aggregate but in the detail.

But I have already protracted the discussion of this subject so far that I will not add more at present, except to conclude what I have to say with several brief

REMARKS.

1. There is an importance to be attached to the sanctification of the body, of which very few persons appear to be aware. Indeed unless the bodily appetites and powers be consecrated to the service of God--unless we learn to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake, and labor, and rest, for the glory of God, entire sanctification is out of the question.
2. It is plain, that very few persons are aware of the great influence which their bodies have over their minds, and of the indispensable necessity of bringing their bodies under and bringing them into subjection.
3. Few people seem to keep the fact steadily in view, that unless their bodies be rightly managed, they will be so fierce and overpowering a source of temptation to the mind, as inevitably to lead it into sin. If they indulge themselves in a stimulating diet, and in the use of those condiments that irritate and rasp the nervous system, their bodies will be of course and of necessity the source of powerful and incessant temptation to evil tempers and vile affections. If persons were aware of the great influence

which the body has over the mind, they would realize that they cannot be too careful to preserve the nervous system from the influence of every improper article of food or drink, and preserve that system as they would the apple of their eye, from every influence that could impair its functions.

4. No one who has opportunity to acquire information in regard to the laws of life and health, and the best means of sanctifying the whole spirit, soul, and body, can be guiltless if he neglect these means of knowledge. Every man is bound to make the structure and laws of both body and mind the subject of as thorough investigation as his circumstances will permit, to inform himself in regard to what are the true principles of perfect temperance, and in what way the most can be made of all his powers of body and mind for the glory of God.

5. From what has been said in these discourses, the reason why the Church has not been entirely sanctified is very obvious. As a body the Church has not believed that such a state was attainable in this life. And this is a sufficient reason, and indeed the best of all reasons for her not having attained it.

6. From what has been said, it is easy to see that the true question in regard to entire sanctification in this life, is its attainability, as a matter of fact. Some have thought the proper question to be, are Christians entirely sanctified in this life? Now certainly this is not the question that needs to be discussed. Suppose it be fully granted that they are not; this fact is sufficiently accounted for, by the consideration that they do not know it, or believe it to be attainable in this life. If they believed it to be attainable, it might no longer be true that they do not attain it. But if provision really is made for this attainment, it amounts to nothing, unless it be recognized and believed. The thing then needed is to bring the Church to see and believe, that this is her high privilege and her duty. It is not enough to say that it is attainable, simply on the ground of natural ability. This is as true of the devil, and of the lost in hell, as of men in this world. But unless grace has put this attainment so within our reach, as that it may be aimed at with the reasonable prospect of success, there is, as a matter of fact, no more provision for our entire sanctification in this life than for the devil's. It seems to be trifling with mankind, merely to maintain the attainability of this state on the ground of natural ability only. The real question is, has grace brought this attainment so within our reach, that we may reasonably expect to experience it in this life? It is admitted, that on the ground of natural ability both wicked men and devils have the power to be entirely holy. But it is also admitted, that their indisposition to use this power aright is so complete, that as a matter of fact, they never will use this power aright, unless influenced to do so by the grace of God. I insist, therefore, that the real question is, whether the provisions of the gospel are such, that, did the Church fully understand and lay hold upon the proffered grace, she might as a matter of fact attain this state?

7. We see how irrelevant and absurd the objection is, that as a matter of fact the Church has not attained this state, and therefore it is not attainable. Why, if they have not understood it to be attainable, it no more proves its unattainableness, than the fact that the heathen have not embraced the gospel proves that they will not when they know it.

8. You see the necessity of fully preaching and insisting upon this doctrine, and of calling it by its true scriptural name. It is astonishing to see to what an extent, there is a tendency among men to avoid the use of scriptural language, and cleave to the language of such men as Edwards, and other great and

good divines. They object to the terms perfection and entire sanctification, and prefer to use the terms entire consecration, and other such terms as have been common in the Church.

Now I would by no means contend about the use of words; but still, it does appear to me, to be of great importance, that we use scripture language and insist upon men being "perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect," and being "sanctified wholly body, soul, and spirit." This appears to me to be of the most importance for this reason, that if we use the language to which the Church has been accustomed upon this subject, she will as she has done, misunderstand us, and will not get before her mind that which we really mean. That this is so is manifest from the fact that the great mass of the Church will express alarm at the use of the terms perfection and entire sanctification, who will neither express or feel any such alarm if we speak of entire consecration. This demonstrates, that they do not, by any means, understand these terms as meaning the same thing. And although I understand them as meaning precisely the same thing, yet I find myself obliged to use the terms perfection and entire sanctification, to possess their minds of my real meaning. This is Bible language. It is unobjectionable language. And inasmuch as the Church understand entire consecration to mean something less than entire sanctification or Christian perfection, it does seem to me of great importance, that ministers should use a phraseology which will call the attention of the Church to the real doctrine of the Bible upon this subject. And I would submit the question with great humility to my beloved brethren in the ministry, whether they are not aware, that Christians have entirely too low an idea of what is implied in entire consecration, and whether it is not useful and best to adopt a phraseology in addressing them that shall call their attention to the real meaning of the words which they use?

9. Young converts have not been allowed so much as to indulge the thought that they could live even for a day wholly without sin. They have as a general thing no more been taught to expect to live even for a day without sin, than they have been taught to expect immediate translation, soul and body, to Heaven. Of course they have not known that there was any other way, than to go on in sin, and however shocking and distressing the necessity has appeared to them in the ardor of their first love, still they have looked upon it as the unalterable fact, that to be in a great measure in bondage to sin was a thing of course while they live in this world. Now with such an orthodoxy as this, with the conviction in the Church and ministry so ripe, settled, and universal, that the utmost that the grace of God can do for men in this world is to bring them to repentance and to leave them to live and die in a state of sinning and repenting, is it at all wonderful that the state of religion should be as it really has been?

10. Christ has been in a great measure lost sight of in some of His most important relations to mankind. He has been known and preached as a pardoning, justifying Savior, but as an actually indwelling and reigning Savior in the heart, He has been but little known. I was struck with a remark, a few years since, of a brother whom I have from that time greatly loved, who had been for a long time in a desponding state of mind, borne down with a great sense of his own vileness, but seeing no way of escape. At an evening meeting the Lord so revealed Himself to him as entirely to overcome the strength of his body, and his brethren were obliged to carry him home. The next time I saw him, he exclaimed to me with a pathos I shall never forget, "Brother Finney, the Church have buried the Savior." Now it is no doubt true, that the Church has become awfully alienated from Christ--has in a great measure lost a knowledge of what He is and ought to be to her--and a great many of her members I have good reason to know, in different parts of the country, are saying with deep and

overpowering emotion, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."

11. With all her orthodoxy, the Church has been for a long time much nearer to Unitarianism than she has imagined. This remark may shock some of my readers, and you may think it savors of censoriousness. But, beloved, I am sure it is said in no such spirit. These are "the words of truth and soberness." So little has been known of Christ, that, if I am not entirely mistaken, there are multitudes in the orthodox churches, who do not know Christ, and who in heart are Unitarians, while in theory they are orthodox.

I have been, within the last two or three years, deeply impressed with the fact, that so many professors of religion are coming to the ripe conviction that they never knew Christ. There have been in this place almost continual developments of this fact, and I doubt whether there is a minister in the land who will present Christ as the gospel presents Him, in all the fulness of His official relations to mankind, who will not be struck and agonized with developments that will assure him that the great mass of professors of religion do not know the Savior. It has been to my own mind a painful and a serious question, what I ought to think of the spiritual state of those who know so little of the blessed Jesus. That none of them have been converted, I dare not say. And yet, that they have been converted, I am afraid to say. I would not for the world "quench the smoking flax or break the bruised reed," or say any thing to stumble or weaken the feeblest lamb of Christ; and yet my heart is sore pained, my soul is sick; my bowels of compassion yearn over the Church of the blessed God. O, the dear Church of Christ! What does she know in her present state of gospel rest, of that "great and perfect peace they have whose minds are stayed on God"?

12. If I am not mistaken, there is an extensive feeling among Christians and ministers, that much is not, that ought to be known and may be known of the Savior. Many are beginning to find that the Savior is to them "as a root out of dry ground, having neither form or comeliness;" that the gospel which they preach and hear is not to them "the power of God unto salvation" from sin; that it is not to them "glad tidings of great joy;" that it is not to them a peace-giving gospel; and many are feeling that if Christ has done for them, all that His grace is able to do in this life, that the plan of salvation is sadly defective, that Christ is not after all a Savior suited to their necessities--that the religion which they have is not suited to the world in which they live--that it does not, cannot make them free; but leaves them in a state of perpetual bondage. Their souls are agonized and tossed to and fro without a resting place. Multitudes also are beginning to see that there are many passages, both in the Old and New Testaments, which they do not understand; that the promises seem to mean much more than they have ever realized, and that the gospel and the plan of salvation as a whole, must be something very different from that which they have as yet apprehended. There are great multitudes all over the country, who are inquiring more earnestly than ever before, after a knowledge of that Jesus who is to save His people from their sins.

A fact was related in my hearing, a short time since, that illustrates, in an affecting manner, the agonizing state of mind in which many Christians are, in regard to the present state of many of the ministers of Christ. I had the statement from the brother himself, who was the subject of his narrative. A sister in the church to which he preached became so sensible that he did not know Christ, as he ought to know Him, that she was full of unutterable agony, and on one occasion, after he had been preaching, fell down at his feet with tears and strong beseechings, that he would exercise faith in

Christ. At another time she was so impressed with a sense of his deficiency in this respect, as a minister, that she addressed him in the deepest anguish of her soul, crying out-- "O I shall die, I shall certainly die, unless you will receive Christ as a full Savior," and attempting to approach him, she sunk down helpless, overcome with agony and travail of soul, at his feet.

There is manifestly a great struggle in the minds of multitudes, that the Savior may be more fully revealed to the Church, that the present ministry especially may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable to His death.

13. If the doctrine of these discourses is true, you see the immense importance of preaching it clearly and fully in revivals of religion. When the hearts of converts are warm with their first love, then is the time to make them fully acquainted with their Savior, to hold Him up in all His offices and relations, so as to break the power of every sin--to break them off for ever from all self-dependence, and to lead them to receive Him as a present, perfect, everlasting Savior.

14. Unless this course be taken, their backsliding is inevitable. You might as well expect to roll back the waters of Niagara with your hand, as to stay the tide of their corruption without a deep, and thorough, and experimental acquaintance with the Savior. And if they are thrown upon their own watchfulness and resources, for strength against temptations, instead of being directed to the Savior, they are certain to become discouraged and fall into continual bondage.

But before I conclude these remarks, I must not omit to notice the indispensable necessity of a willingness to do the will of God, in order rightly to understand this doctrine. If a man is unwilling to give up his sins, to deny himself all ungodliness and every worldly lust--if he is unwilling to be set apart wholly to the service of the Lord, he will either reject this doctrine altogether, or only intellectually admit it, without receiving it into his heart. It is an imminently dangerous state of mind to consent to this or any other doctrine of the gospel, and not reduce it to practice.

15. Much evil has been done by those who have professedly embraced this doctrine in theory, and rejected it in practice. Their spirit and temper have been such as to lead those who saw them to infer, that the tendency of the doctrine itself is bad. And it is not to be doubted that some who have professed to have experienced the power of this doctrine in their hearts, have greatly disgraced religion by exhibiting any other spirit than that of an entirely sanctified soul. But why, in a Christian land, should this be a stumbling block. When the heathen see persons from Christian nations who professedly adopt the Christian system, exhibit on their shores and in their countries, the spirit which many of them do, they infer that this is the tendency of the Christian religion. To this our Missionaries reply that they are only nominal Christians, only speculative, not real believers. Should thousands of our church members go among them, they would have the same reason to complain, and might reply to the Missionaries, these are not merely nominal believers, but profess to have experienced this Christian religion in their own hearts. Now what would the Missionaries reply? Why, to be sure, that they were professors of religion; but that they really did not know Christ; that they were deceiving themselves with a name to live, while in fact they were dead in trespasses and sins.

It has often been a matter of astonishment to me, that in a Christian land, it should be a stumbling block to any, that some, or if you please, a majority of those who profess to receive and to have

experienced the truth of this doctrine, should exhibit an unchristian spirit. What if the same objection should be brought against the Christian religion; against any and every doctrine of the gospel; that the great majority, and even nine tenths of all the professed believers and receivers of those doctrines were proud, worldly, selfish, and exhibited any thing but a right spirit? Now this objection might be made with truth to the whole professedly Christian Church. But would the conclusiveness of such an objection be admitted in Christian lands? Who does not know the ready answer to all such objections as these, that the doctrines of Christianity do not sanction such conduct, and that it is not the real belief of them that begets any such spirit or conduct; that the Christian religion abhors all these things to which they object. And now suppose it should be replied to this, that a tree is known by its fruits, and that so great a majority of the professors of religion could not exhibit such a spirit, unless it were the tendency of Christianity itself to beget it. Now who would not reply to this, that this state of mind and course of conduct of which they complain, is the natural state of man uninfluenced by the gospel of Christ; that in these instances, on account of unbelief, the gospel has failed to correct what was already wrong, and what needed not the influence of any corrupt doctrine to produce that state of mind? It appears to me, that these objectors against this doctrine on account of the fact that some and perhaps many who have professed to receive it, have exhibited a wrong spirit, take it for granted that the doctrine produces this spirit, instead of considering that a wrong spirit is natural to men, and that the difficulty is that through unbelief this doctrine has failed to correct what was before wrong. They reason as if they supposed the human heart needed something to beget within it a bad spirit, and as if they supposed that a belief in this doctrine had made men wicked, instead of recognizing the fact, that they were before wicked and that, through unbelief, the gospel has failed to make them holy.

16. But let it not be understood, that I suppose or admit that any considerable number who have professed to have received this doctrine into their hearts, have as a matter of fact exhibited a bad spirit. I must say that it has been eminently otherwise so far as my own observation extends. And I am fully convinced, that if I have ever seen Christianity in the world, and the spirit of Christ, that it has been exhibited by those, as a general thing, who have professed to believe, and to have received this doctrine into their hearts.

17. How amazingly important it is, that the ministry and the Church should come fully to a right understanding and embracing of this doctrine. O it will be like life from the dead. The proclamation of it is now regarded by multitudes as "good tidings of great joy." From every quarter, we get the gladsome intelligence, that souls are entering into the deep rest and peace of the gospel, that they are awaking to a life of faith and love--and that instead of sinking down into Antinomianism, they are eminently more benevolent, active, holy, and useful than ever before--that they are eminently more prayerful, watchful, diligent, meek, sober-minded and heavenly in all their lives. This as a matter of fact, is the character of those, to a very great extent at least, with whom I have been acquainted, who have embraced this doctrine. I say this for no other reason than to relieve the anxieties of those who have heard very strange reports, and whose honest fears have been awakened in regard to the tendency of this doctrine.

18. I have by no means given this subject so ample a discussion as I might and should have done, but for my numerous cares and responsibilities. I have been obliged to write in the midst of the excitement and labor of a revival of religion, and do not by any means suppose, either that I have exhausted the subject, or so ably defended it as I might have done, had I been under other

circumstances. But, dearly beloved, under the circumstances, I have done what I could, and thank my Heavenly Father that I have been spared to say this much in defence of the great, leading, central truth of revelation--the ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

And now, blessed and beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Lord, "let me beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." "And may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

GLOSSARY

of easily misunderstood terms as defined by Mr. Finney himself.

Compiled by Katie Stewart

1. **Complacency, or Esteem:** "Complacency, as a state of will or heart, is only benevolence modified by the consideration or relation of right character in the object of it. God, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, in all ages, are as virtuous in their self-denying and untiring labours to save the wicked, as they are in their complacent love to the saints." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE VII)*. Also, "approbation of the character of its object. Complacency is due only to the good and holy." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE XII)*.
2. **Disinterested Benevolence:** "By disinterested benevolence I do not mean, that a person who is disinterested feels no interest in his object of pursuit, but that he seeks the happiness of others for its own sake, and not for the sake of its reaction on himself, in promoting his own happiness. He chooses to do good because he rejoices in the happiness of others, and desires their happiness for its own sake. God is purely and disinterestedly benevolent. He does not make His creatures happy for the sake of thereby promoting His own happiness, but because He loves their happiness and chooses it for its own sake. Not that He does not feel happy in promoting the happiness of His creatures, but that He does not do it for the sake of His own gratification." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE I)*.
3. **Divine Sovereignty:** "The sovereignty of God consists in the independence of his will, in consulting his own intelligence and discretion, in the selection of his end, and the means of accomplishing it. In other words, the sovereignty of God is nothing else than infinite benevolence directed by infinite knowledge." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXVI)*.
4. **Election:** "That all of Adam's race, who are or ever will be saved, were from eternity chosen by God to eternal salvation, through the sanctification of their hearts by faith in Christ. In other words, they are chosen to salvation by means of sanctification. Their salvation is the end- their sanctification is a means. Both the end and the means are elected, appointed, chosen; the means as really as the end, and for the sake of the end." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXIV)*.
5. **Entire Sanctification:** "Sanctification may be entire in two senses: (1.) In the sense of present, full obedience, or entire consecration to God; and, (2.) In the sense of continued, abiding consecration or obedience to God. Entire sanctification, when the terms are used in this sense, consists in being established, confirmed, preserved, continued in a state of sanctification or of

entire consecration to God." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LVIII)*.

6. **Moral Agency:** "Moral agency is universally a condition of moral obligation. The attributes of moral agency are intellect, sensibility, and free will." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.
7. **Moral Depravity:** "Moral depravity is the depravity of free-will, not of the faculty itself, but of its free action. It consists in a violation of moral law. Depravity of the will, as a faculty, is, or would be, physical, and not moral depravity. It would be depravity of substance, and not of free, responsible choice. Moral depravity is depravity of choice. It is a choice at variance with moral law, moral right. It is synonymous with sin or sinfulness. It is moral depravity, because it consists in a violation of moral law, and because it has moral character." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
8. **Human Reason:** "the intuitive faculty or function of the intellect... it is the faculty that intuits moral relations and affirms moral obligation to act in conformity with perceived moral relations." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.
9. **Retributive Justice:** "Retributive justice consists in treating every subject of government according to his character. It respects the intrinsic merit or demerit of each individual, and deals with him accordingly." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXIV)*.
10. **Total Depravity:** "Moral depravity of the unregenerate is without any mixture of moral goodness or virtue, that while they remain unregenerate, they never in any instance, nor in any degree, exercise true love to God and to man." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
11. **Unbelief:** "the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. The heart's rejection of evidence, and refusal to be influenced by it. The will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived, or evidence presented." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LV)*.