

SOME OTHER ARGUMENTS FOR PERFECTION.

Rev. Arthur C. Zepp.

"Walk before me and be thou perfect."

What if there are other sources making the demand of us for perfection other than God's word? When we recognize these we will not be so amazed at His demands.

There is an *inherent constitutional demand* in every moral man for perfection in all realms. In other words the constitution of the human mind is such that it demands *perfection*. A friend called at our recently completed home and said, "Bro. Zepp, what is the matter with your porch? Oh, the pillars are slightly out of line. Well, I thought something was wrong, but I could not just tell what it was. "See," he replied, "we are so constructed we demand that things be right." I had never before noticed this strong argument for perfection and following it out I was surprised to see by reflection how the illustrations of this position abounded on every hand. Later, returning home, and while inspecting some newly made cement walks, a young lady said, "It bulges there, is low here, and it is not right yonder, and the top coat is not rich enough with cement." She was not fault finding but merely giving expression of the inherent demand for rightness. Elizabeth Harrison, author of *Child Nature*, and principal of Chicago Kindergarten Work, tells how, when a little girl, she drew a cart for a little girl friend. She wanted her also to draw a horse for the cart, but the paper was too skimp for a whole horse, so she drew its hind legs thinking that would satisfy the child, and turning to her she said, "There now, you will have to be satisfied with that." Her little friend was heart broken, and bursting into tears she sobbed, "I want a whole horse!" What is this incident but an illustration that we constitutionally demand perfection. We are built that way. Nothing less satisfies.

If any man doubts this let him hang a picture crooked for his wife at house-cleaning time or put the hard burner half an inch out of plumb, and he will hear from her. Exacting? Hard to please? No, not necessarily. She is just built that way. This inherent constitutional demand in men for *perfection* explains the *sense of dissatisfaction* we feel at anything unfinished or incomplete, as a building long delayed in completion.

Another argument for perfection is found in the fact of *criticism*. What is criticism anyhow, but a complaint, folks and things are not perfect. Criticism is a confession we believe in and demand perfection one of another. If this is granted, criticism is not so reprehensible since it is an instructive constitutional expression of our demand for perfection. Of course there is a perversion of legitimate, kind, helpful criticism into mean, fault-finding. This is always wrong.

Again, the existence of squares, plummets, levels, as well as the science of mathematics, all imply man demands perfection, rightness. One hundred, the standard of perfection in our school work, implies the same. The world has its standards of excellence of perfection in art, literature, music, painting and sculpture.

The world believes in *perfection* as the only standard. Hence, their recognition of certain works of art, music, poetry, history, novels as well as certain authors, as *standard*, is but an illustration, the *consensus of opinion* ascribes perfection to these and inferiority and mediocrity to others.

The most perfect service attracts the travel-

ing public and secures the bulk of the traffic. Invariably the travellers seek the fireproof, modern hotels. The most perfect resorts in scenery, climate and equipment, get the most patronage.

Said a bank cashier to the writer, "We are so exacting in our business standards and relations we demand binding contracts, interest and principle paid according to our strictest rules, it is strange to me how we can be so lax and easily satisfied in our relations to God."

The world is thoroughly committed to the doctrine of perfection. They are constantly reaching out and struggling for the "*best of everything*," and all the while from a worldly viewpoint they are aiming to make the *most* of themselves, aiming for the highest positions.

We have especially noticed how the commercial world in its advertisement confesses its full faith in the doctrine of *perfection*. "*Eventually you will have to have the best, why not now?*" (This principle is equally true of "full salvation," as it is of Washburn-Crosby's fine flour.) Scores of things on the market are advertised extensively as *perfect*. There is the *perfect* carpet sweeper, perfect heaters, perfection oil stoves, perfect fireless cooker, perfection cream separator, perfection binder, perfection reapers, perfection water heaters, etc. They somehow know there is a great inducement to buy commodities thus advertised, as perfection is what all the world is looking for. Now, personally, we object to the world having a monopoly on perfection. We believe in and contend for Christian perfection. It is surely amusing to be frowned upon as insane, for advocating in another sense a doctrine the world believes in, and madly rushes after daily.

But add to these arguments, the constitutional demand, the argument from criticism, and from the consensus of opinion of men, the world's faith in and pursuit of perfection, etc., the weightier argument from the Imperative Command of the text from Almighty God, "*Be thou perfect!*" as well as the fact God demands it of us, as well as commands it, promises it, accomplishes it, and exhibits it, the wonder is any can consent to remain in imperfection, especially when God pledges, stakes His Almightyness as the surety for its accomplishment. "I am the ALMIGHTY GOD (therefore) *walk before me and be thou perfect!*"

That the perfection God demands of us is not irrational, absurd or unreasonable, is evidently seen from the argument of God's omniscience. Perfect wisdom does not demand the impossible. It will not make us infallible or immutable or dehumanize us or divert us of a legitimate and innocent humanity (for Elias was subject to like passions with us) nor endow us with angelic qualities. We will still have our nervous system and be subject to the aches, pains and infirmities and limitations of the body of our humiliation as well as be subjects of very fierce Satanic onslaught, and temptations sharp and keen, as well as be still liable to fall; it is admissable (and thank God, regainable). The necessity will still be on us to grow in grace and advance in the divine life; we will still need to watch and pray and plan against the wily attacks of a subtle unprincipled foe. The price of this liberty in fact, as one has said, is "eternal vigilance." *What I say unto all* (including the holy). *Watch!*

It is the loving God with all the heart and a preference (not purpose) for obedience to His will and glad acquiescence in His reproofs, and finally the text itself gives the finest, most condensed definition on record of the perfection it

enjoins: "*Walk before me and be thou perfect.*" Hence, Christian perfection is perfection blameless under God's judgment, such as He who weighs motives approves and is satisfied with. We may be condemnable in the eyes of men but God who tries the hearts of men, seeing the underlying motives may command. He does not exact perfection beyond our finite capacity, whereas men demand of us little short of angelic capacity and obedience.

Notice again, it is *Be thou perfect*," and not "do perfect." It is an inner state by faith and not of works lest any man should boast.

And finally let us not despair of attaining so high a standard. He who gave the imperative command of the text also made a promise which covers it: "I am the Lord which *do* make you holy." Hence, sanctification is rightly defined "that act of divine grace whereby we (the justified) are made holy." Beloved reader, "walk before God and be thou perfect."

QUOTATIONS FROM DR. GREGORY MANTLE.

There is no finality in the Christian life.

The apostle Paul saw a vision. Friends, what you see you cannot unsee.

"His blood cleanseth from all sin"—if all doesn't mean all, what does it mean?

Beloved, are you living like a barnyard fowl, or like the soaring eagle? God has not made us for being penned up like a chicken in a hen-coop.

If you are not living a holy life, God is not pleased with your advertisement of Him.

If God has made me for a five dollar gold piece and I am only worth fifty cents, He is losing four dollars and fifty cents on me. If God has made me to be holy and I am not holy, He is also losing on me.

All of God's biddings are enabling. Every command in the Bible is conveyed to us in the form of power.

If God has called you to be a holy man or woman, it is easier for you to be a holy person than an unholy one.

I have no message for the doubter. If you will not believe, I cannot help you.

What we want is to get so familiar with God's Word that it will be as hard for us to doubt as to blaspheme or get drunk in the streets.

The descending stream of blessing always follows the ascending stream of prayer.

Every unsanctified man and woman is a "cake not turned."

I know of nothing more pathetic than the fact that God is face to face with a world that is not in harmony with His program.

Where the world comes in at the door, the Holy Ghost goes out through the window.

The whole fabric of Christianity is built on the assumption that we are by nature sinners.

There is no twilight in the moral realm.

The Holy Spirit is exactly like Jesus.

The destructive critics haven't got the key to the Bible. You can't find your way through the Bible if you haven't got the key.—Pentecostal Herald.

Brother F. T. Wright, who has been helping his father on his farm during the summer and fall, will enter the work again right away.

We need all our strength and all the grace God can give us for today's burdens and today's battles. Tomorrow belongs to our heavenly Father.—Theodore L. Cuyler.