

It is not enough that I believe the doctrine taught in the scriptures, and promised to mortals some time, it may be at death, but I must believe it is for me here and now. Unless this is a settled conviction of the soul, all my efforts are fruitless.

2. I must believe that God for Christ's sake is willing, able and ready to save us now. On His part all is done. The atonement is complete, the provisions ample, and He only waits for a heart willing to receive. He is more anxious to save than we are to be saved.

Let us pause at this point and ask ourselves the questions:

1. Have I a tolerably clear understanding of the holiness I now seek?

2. Do I feel my need of holiness of heart, to rid me of my felt and mourned depravity, or do I seek it that I may be more happy?

3. Am I anxious to obtain this blessing? And does my desire for it exceed my desire for any earthly good?

4. Do I believe that God is able to give me a pure heart now? or am I looking for it at some future time?

5. Do I believe that God is willing to sanctify me wholly, and to do it now?

6. Do I now commit my soul into His hands to be saved, and to be saved this moment?

We know of no directions more simple and more wise than those given by Mr. Wisely.

"But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin and perfected in love? This faith is a divine evidence or conviction.

1. "That God hath promised this sanctification in the holy scriptures.

2. "It is a divine evidence or conviction that what God hath promised He is able to perform.

3. "It is a divine evidence that God is able and willing to do it now.

4. "To this confidence that God is able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more—a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it.

"In that hour it is done; God says to the inmost soul, 'According to thy faith be it done unto thee.' Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; is clean from all unrighteousness."

We insist that a soul may believe that he has "made the surrender," before he receives the witness of the Spirit that he is sanctified. If he does not believe that he has made the surrender he cannot believe that God accepts him fully.

We insist further, that a soul does not "deceive himself" who believes the work is wrought in him before he has the witness of the Spirit that the work is done. Faith is the condition on which the blessing is received, while the witness of the Spirit is the knowledge which God conveys to the mind that the work has been wrought. The error here is in confounding faith with knowledge. We may believe the work done without knowing it done.

There is no doctrine more clearly taught by Mr. Wesley than that a soul must constantly believe the work of sanctification complete, although he may not always have the witness of the Spirit. Speaking of the hour of temptation, he says, "At such times there is absolute need of that witness, without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist." But, says one, "I have no witness that I am saved from sin. And yet I have no doubt of it." "Very well," responds Mr. Wesley, "as long as you have no doubt it is enough; when you have

you will need that witness."—(Works, vol. vi. 516.)

The language of Jesus is, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."—Mark xi. 24.

The word translated in this verse, "ye receive," is in the present tense, and the rendering of our English version is precisely correct. Numerous efforts have been made to change the tense of this verse, but it stands as the word of Jesus who knew whereof He affirmed. Let others attempt to mend the theology of Jesus if they will, but we choose to abide by it as it stands in the divine record.

Now, according to the experience of thousands, the process seems to be this: The Christian seeking entire sanctification believes intellectually that entire conformity to the will of God, as to conduct and words, as to thoughts and affections, is his privilege and duty. He believes intellectually in the adaptation of the provisions which God has made, and in the truth of God's promise in this regard. Conscious of impurity within, he earnestly desires to be cleansed from its least remains. Considering the prayer of the apostle, "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," and the assurance, "who also will do it," and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth from all sin;" and assured in his consciousness that he has brought his sacrifice to the altar and bound it there; that he has made a full surrender, an unreserved consecration, with faith exercised through divinely given power (which power is requisite to the exercise of faith), he says, "I now give all. Thou dost now receive. The blood of Christ cleanses now." And in that moment, in view of the condition fulfilled, viz., his implicit faith in the promise and the atonement, the Holy Spirit does the work, and he is in that moment sanctified in soul, and body, and spirit. His faith then rests on the truth of God, and is not a belief that we receive, that we may receive, but, as Mr. Wesley expresses it, "a divine evidence and conviction that he doeth it;" it being always understood—and this is the point to be guarded—that it is faith for a present blessing; but the blessing is conditioned on faith, and is conferred at the very instant the faith is exercised.

We are not saved because we have consecrated all to God; but, having made such a consecration we are to believe that it is accepted, and we are received for Christ's sake. I know not what else faith has to do. It is not enough that the gift touch the altar, it must be placed there in faith that "the altar sanctifieth the gift." Unbelief may cut off the virtue of the altar, and the sacrifice may remain untouched by fire. Having placed our gift on the altar, we are authorized to believe that God receives us according to His promise. We then receive through that very faith we are graciously assisted to exercise.

"But can I believe before I have the witness that the work is accomplished?"

We have always found it difficult to understand how a soul could believe for full salvation after it is conscious that the work is done. We have always believed that entire sanctification is a blessing conditioned on faith; and that the faith upon which it is conditioned must be exercised before the blessing is received. But according to the fallacy which we are exposing, the blessing is first received and the faith upon which it is conditioned is exercised afterwards.

If I cannot believe for entire sanctification until I am conscious of its presence in my

heart, I can never believe for it; for the evidence of its possession must be subsequent to its reception, unless the evidence comes first and the blessing afterward.

The divine order is first believe, then receive, then know. But if the dogma we oppose be correct, it is the evidence first, the blessing next, and the faith, upon which it is conditioned, last. This entirely upsets the Divine order, and no fruit is brought to perfection.

With these explanations we are prepared to say to all seeking the grace of perfect love:

1. Do not trust in feelings. Nothing is more uncertain. Feeling is not faith, nor is it salvation, nor yet the condition of salvation. It is only the fruit of salvation, or what comes of salvation. Faith may be exercised and salvation secured in the absence of any remarkable feeling.

We do not ignore feeling. We shall have it; but we should not be troubled if it does not come at the moment.

2. Let us fix our faith on the promise of the everlasting God.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

And looks to that alone;

Laughs at impossibilities,

And cries It shall be done!"

Let us not doubt God in the absence of great emotion, but let us trust Him, until He "opens in our hearts a little heaven."

3. Does the reader desire entire sanctification at whatever cost? You have long desired it, and often prayed for it, and done all you knew to obtain it.

This is all well. You may have put forth as much physical effort as is needful for "bodily exercise profiteth little." You have doubtless prayed as much and as earnestly as is necessary. Praying will not save you. Your salvation is not conditioned on prayer, or "bodily exercise." Do you fully believe in full salvation attainable in this life? Do you believe it is your duty and your privilege to enjoy it now, just as you are? See that these points are all well settled; for this being saved now, and as you are, are points not so easily gained.

Have you made a full and entire consecration of all to God—the body with all its members, the soul with all its powers—property, to be used for God's glory and as He requires?

If you have given all to God a "living sacrifice," it is your right to claim the promise, "I will receive you." You have the right to believe that the promise is now fulfilled in you, and that He now saves you. Christ, remember, is your altar; and if your sacrifice is complete "the altar sanctifieth the gift." Whatsoever thus "toucheth the altar is holy. We repeat: If your gift is perfect, if your sacrifice is complete, if your consecration is not wanting at any point, the grace of entire sanctification must be given, here and now. We are not able to see how it can be otherwise. God cannot deny Himself. He has promised, and must fulfill it.

But you have no feeling. "By grace are ye saved through faith," not feeling. But you have feeling. You may not have as much as you desire, or as you have been expecting; but you will not deny that you have feeling.

Which is the most reliable, the immutable promise of God or your uncertain emotions? Feeling may mislead you, but God's promise never. In due time you will have all the feeling you need, but for the present, believe the promise.

Will you, then, at this moment, just as you are, without regard to your emotions, in chill-