

# The King's Highway

## An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35

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### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

(Christ said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). This is an astonishing statement, an amazing commandment of our Lord Jesus. If He had given it to the angels and we had been standing by, we should not have wondered at His wisdom for we expect perfection of the angels; they are perfect beings. But when we hear Him saying it to His disciples, and feel that it is said to us also, we sit up and take notice. (For some of the quotations given below, the writer is indebted to Rev. W. E. Shepard, evangelist, my esteemed friend.)

"Be Ye Perfect." I wonder what the Master means! Many good people are confused and in doubt about it. Let us be assured that the Master is not demanding absolute perfection, for such perfection belongs to God only. "He is perfect in all his attributes, both natural and moral. If Christians could be absolutely perfect, they would have perfect wisdom, and their lives would admit of no mistakes." The holiness people do not teach that humans are to become absolutely perfect.

And I do not believe that Jesus expected angelic perfection of His disciples, for that pertains to angels only. They have a perfection of being and of freedom and knowledge, untainted by sin. Even though they are purified, mortals do not possess such perfection." Oh, I know we used to sing when we were children:

"I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,  
With a crown upon my forehead  
And a harp within my hand."

But we are not singing that song nowadays, very much; we have learned better. Thank the Lord! We have good reasons, and Scriptural for not singing that song. We expect to be exalted to a position in the kingdom of Christ far above angels. It is only for a season that we are beneath them. The Bible reveals that angels are the servants of saved souls, our guardians through life. Throughout all the grand eternity we shall never become angels, and I am glad.

Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect," and I am sure that He had no reference to Adamic perfection; that belonged to our foreparents in the Garden of Eden before they fell into sin. Prior to that sad day, they were physically and mentally perfect, as well as morally so. This perfection was lost to the world through disobedience and sin. "Adam and Eve had no defect in their understanding and affections." Men are striving to attain to this estate but have not reached it. No one can enjoy the per-

fection of body and mind until the resurrection morn but we are resting in that glorious hope.

"Christian perfection does not free us from temptation. Satan is not killed when 'our old man is crucified' and, since he tempted our Lord, we may expect to be assailed at every point as He was; and, after the soul is cleansed from all sin, you will be carried into realms of experience where you will be tempted along different lines and in other ways than in all your past.

"Christian perfection does not free one from the possibility of sinning. We can not accept the teaching of once in grace, always in grace." We have known persons who were once in grace and who are now in disgrace, and we feel sorry for them.

"Free agency is not destroyed in any degree of grace. During all our probationary life we will have the power to choose, and may yield to temptation and commit sin. But we shall not be compelled to."

This perfection which Jesus exhorts and commands us to obtain will not exempt us from the possibility of failing from grace in this life. "Angels fell from their celestial perfection. Adam fell from his Edenic purity. The apostle Paul watched lest he should backslide and become a castaway. Some holy persons adown the ages have fallen from grace." Jesus warned His disciples and begged them to watch and pray that they be not overcome in temptation. But some one may ask, How can a holy person fall again into condemnation and sin? I answer, You may fall as Adam and Eve fell—by listening to the suggestions of the enemy and believing and obeying him. Some unwary souls are beguiled into sin through their curiosity.

Christian perfection will not always keep us from making mistakes and blunders. "Our memories may fail us and cause serious trouble. The human mind is given to freaks sometimes. We may make wrong conclusions and act accordingly, and yet have pure motives. We may be mistaken in appearances, have queer imaginations, conceive wrong opinions, say the right thing at the wrong time, and in many ways fail to do the best thing because of our lack of mental and physical perfection. One may make mistakes and remain sanctified, providing he acknowledges them and begs pardon of them who are affected by his mistakes, thus guarding against repeating them; but we can not commit one sin and remain in the experience of perfect love.

God looks at the motive that is back of our actions. One might kill his neighbor

and yet be innocent, or he might save his neighbor's life and at the same time be a murderer. Suppose he sees him about to be killed by a wild beast; he attempts to shoot the beast but kills his friend. God looks at the motive and accounts him innocent. On the other hand, suppose this neighbor were his enemy and he sees him about to be killed by the rage of the animal. He takes advantage of the occasion and attempts to shoot the man while pretending to kill the beast. He kills the beast by missing the man, and his enemy is spared; but the gunner is a murderer at heart, and God accounts him as such. Yes, friends, God looks at the motives and judges us thereby."

"Christian perfection does not stop our growth in grace; rather, it puts hindrances to such growth out of our way. It is not the top round of the ladder of Christian experience; it prepares the soul for higher climbing. We may always see mountain peaks ahead to inspire and encourage us."

"It is not a new doctrine like some of the modern false systems of religion. It is as old as the Bible and older." It is not getting warmed over—not being reclaimed from a backslidden experience; such must be restored to justification before they can have faith for sanctification. But some one cries, "Hold on, preacher; enough of that!" Very well, I'll not weary you with negations, but proceed at once to tell you what this perfection is.

When one has Christian perfection he has a clean heart, filled with pure love, "God's kind of love." This enables him to pity his inferiors, admire his superiors, and sympathize with his equals, his peers. He loves his enemies and watches for opportunities to manifest that love. He throws the mantle of charity over the mistakes and misfortunes of his friends. He admires and esteems all who have attained to advanced positions and experiences in grace and intellections.

It is easy for a wholly sanctified person to "forgive and forget" the slights and insults of his fellows. He considers their inferior estate and pities them. He seeks to redress and avoids all chances to "get even." He turns the other cheek to the smiters, gladly goes the second mile. He never turns a poor human away empty if it is within his power to supply the need. This perfect love enables him to bless those who curse him, do good to those who hate him and pray for them that despitefully use him and persecute him. He is able to suffer long and be kind to those who caused the suffering.

This grace keeps him from becoming puffed up when he is praised and from

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