

# The King's Highway

## An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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### THE REPRESSION THEORY OF SANCTIFICATION

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It is the purpose of this paper to set forth several insuperable objections to that definition of entire sanctification which makes it consist of the power of the Holy Spirit repressing inbred sin, choking down the old man instead of crucifying him till he is stone dead.

Our first objection is that it does not harmonize with the consciousness of entirely sanctified persons. These testify with Arvid Gradin to "the highest tranquility, serenity and peace of mind, with a deliverance from every fleshy desire, and a cessation of all, even inward sins."

We admit that if we are entirely passive in sanctification we might not be conscious of this repressive force, holding in check our sinful proclivities. But it is a principle of the great scheme of gospel salvation to employ the agency of the subject. He is to be a co-worker with God. Hence he would be conscious of his share in the work of repression even if he were not conscious of the work performed by the Spirit.

The uniform testimony is to a delightful sense of inward purity, the absence of all risings of malice, envy, and self-seeking. Now, if all these still exist within, but only neutralized by a superior force crushing them down, consciousness must attest to a falsehood when she bears witness to entire inward purity.

2. Lack of a Scriptural basis. It is a remarkable fact that while the Greek language richly abounds in words signifying repression, a half a score of which occur in the New Testament, yet none of them is used of inbred sin, but such verbs as signify to cleanse, to purge, to purify, to mortify and to crucify. When St. Paul says that he keeps under his body and brings it into subjection, he makes no allusion to the flesh, the carnal mind, but to his innocent bodily appetites. In Pauline usage body is different from flesh. We have diligently sought in both the Old Testament and the New for exhortations to seek the repression of sin. The uniform command is to put away sin, to purify the heart, to purge out the old leaven, and to seek to be sanctified throughout soul, body and spirit. Repressive power is nowhere ascribed to the blood of Christ, but rather purgative efficacy. Now if these verbs which signify cleansing, washing, crucifying, mortifying, or making dead, are all used in a tropical or metaphorical sense, it is very evident that the literal truth signified is something far stronger than repression. It is eradication, extinction of being, destruction.

3. The repressive theory of holiness is out of harmony with the Divine holiness. Holiness in man must mean precisely the same as holiness in God, who announces Himself as holy, and then founds human obligations to holiness upon this revealed attribute: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Who dares to say that God's holiness is different in kind from man's

holiness, save that the one is original and the other is inwrought by the Holy Ghost?

We know that Mansell in his "Limits of Religious Thought," has carried out the Hamiltonian philosophy of the relativity of human knowledge and his philosophy of nescience, in regard to the absolute and finite, to this fatal point, that it is possible that we know nothing of the real, moral attributes of God. We confess to a lenient feeling towards John Stuart Mill, when he says of Mansell's God that he cannot worship this unknown being, and that he will go to hell first.

Who can confidently adore and sincerely love a being who may, in the inmost essence of his being, be pure malignity in the outward guise of benevolence? Now if holiness in man is the same in kind as holiness in God—and it is perilous to deny it—what becomes of the repressive theory?

Are there explosive elements in the Divine nature and is there some outside power holding down? Let St. John answer: "In him is no darkness"—moral evil—"at all." His nature is unmingled purity. This must be the pattern of our holiness. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Hence if any one should ask me to insure his admittance into a holy heaven, into the presence of a holy God, with inbred sin in his heart, though held down by the Holy Ghost himself, I should demand a very large premium; for the risk is very great. In fact, I should decline the risk altogether, and send the applicant to some other office, for instance, Universalism.

4. Our next objection to this hypothesis is that it confounds the distinction between holiness and virtue. We never call God virtuous, nor angels, nor Jesus Christ, nor the spirits of the just made perfect, whether in the body or out of the body. We do not magnify, but rather belittle the Son of God, to ascribe to Him only virtue. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. What is the specific difference between virtue and holiness? Repression. Virtue is the triumph of right against strong inward tendencies toward the opposite. Jesus triumphed over outward temptations to sin, and was holy. Mary Magdalene, by Divine grace, triumphed over strong inward tendencies toward vice and was virtuous. The repressive theory of holiness, involving as it must the co-working of the human soul with the Divine Represser, confounds the broad distinction between holiness and virtue, and banishes holiness from the earth, substituting virtue instead. In fact, we do not see any possibility, on this theory, for a fallen man ever to become holy in the sense of the entire extinction of inbred sin. If this is only repressed here, it may be only repressed forever hereafter. If the Holy Spirit cannot eradicate original sin now, and here through faith in the blood of Jesus, what assurance have we that He can ever entirely sanctify our souls? But, if by repression is

meant the repression of the innocent passions of sanctified human nature after the extinction of inbred sin, unbelief, malice, self-will, and every other characteristic of depraved human nature which is sinful per se, we accept it as Wesleyan and Scriptural.

The Plymouth Brethren and some other advocates of the repressive theory include not only the innocent appetites, but also the flesh, the carnal mind, and they say that we are not to be really dead unto sin, but to reckon ourselves dead, making entire sanctification a putative and forensic, and not a real and inward work. With this definitive they can earnestly preach entire sanctification, that is completeness in Christ, but not the completeness of His work in us; but how a believer in inwrought and inherent holiness can preach the repressive theory of entire sanctification honestly, with no mental reservation, is to the writer a great mystery. The phrase italicised is an evident contradiction in terms.

### FUDDLED FRENCHMEN

A ten-foot shelf has already been written on "Why France Collapsed." Not one of them has quoted a dispatch from Vichy to the New York Post. The dispatch reads:

"A government spokesman said today that alcoholism was the chief cause of the moral collapse of the French Army under the German attack, and that it was the worst of the four problems of France. The other three he listed as tuberculosis, cancer, and syphilis. He said drunkenness was rampant in the army during the eight months of inactivity at the start of the war; that a single hospital in the fourth army area had 814 cases of delirium tremens during January, and that the 'disastrous era of intoxication' by young French soldiers had caused most of the cases of nervous breakdowns and shellshock when they had to face the German dive-bombers and tanks."

These statements have been checked; they are one hundred per cent correct.—Young People.

### FEDERAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION

The Federal Council, in its biennial session in Atlantic City, called upon President Roosevelt and the secretaries of the Army and Navy to take such action as will secure "the fullest possible moral and health protection for our soldiers and sailors from exploitation by liquor interests and commercial vice." It reminded them that in 1917 laws were adopted forbidding the sale of liquor to men in uniform and throwing a ten-mile zone around training camps as protection against organized vice. A second resolution directed the officers of the Federal Council to call upon the General Commission for Army and Navy chaplains to study all problems involving the moral and spiritual welfare of trainees.—United Presbyterian.

Mr. Donald Tedlie, Feb 41