

POSSE
NON PECCARE

HOLINESS
MORE A RIGHT
AND
LESS
A FIGHT

A WESTGATE STUDY FILE

POSSE NON PECCARE
A STUDY FILE THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS

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INTRODUCTION

David Wilkerson in “Hungry for more of Jesus” defines the issue of holiness in terms of the age with reference to happiness. That’s exactly where Jesus started in the Sermon on the Mount.. Wilkerson addresses the issue of faith and says “too many Christians rush to faith seminars, distribute faith tapes and quote “faith scriptures” but fail to realise that Jesus is The Word and intimacy with Him is what counts. “One of the great tragedies of the Church in this generation and one of God’s greatest griefs is that so many Christians are not truly happy. They put on a good front-singing, clapping, smiling and praising. But lurking just beneath the surface is loneliness and deep misery; their joy does not last. These Christians are hot, then suddenly cold. Depression runs over them like a steamroller. Many times their marriages follow the pattern as well. One day all is well and next day they are miserable. They say “You can’t expect to stay happy and loving all the time”. Who knows the trouble we are in? “No-one knows like Jesus.” Our Precious Lord assured us of the sufficiency of His provision. He said, “You will receive power”. “My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one”, He said. “I will not leave you comfortless” He said, “***He(the Holy Spirit) will teach you*** all things” He said. When we as parents seek to mature our children we do not send them to war-that is the last thing we want to do-we send them to school. They come under a series of instructors or teachers and enter a system we call education which follows a *curriculum*. So it is with the Christian –we come under the Holy Spirit as our teacher and the curriculum of scripture principia. We are not like the disciples before Pentecost who had the Spirit *with them* like pupils have but like the empowered disciples after Pentecost who had the Spirit *in them* (John 14.17). The implications of this nuance are in themselves revolutionary for holy living as this document seeks to adduce to the strengthening of “*the faith*” of Christ.

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HAS PROTESTANT ORTHODOXY GOT IT EXACTLY RIGHT?

Let’s start with where the prevailing theology of Evangelicalism gets validity and where I submit it has demurred and deviated from the biblical norm and opted for a different *default position*. What I am acutely aware of and intending to bring to the attention of the Christian constituency in this moderate sized study is a perceptible imbalance recognisable in orthodoxy old and new because the “non posse non peccare” emphasis is presented as the default Christian position instead of the “posse non peccare” standard of life being the true biblical default position. The gospel must testify to sin in the natural man and to its remedy but the truth must encompass the effectual working of the Holy Spirit allied to the obedience of faith that works by love in the saints of God. The twin emphasis is here to stay but today’s evangelicalism is in grave danger of failing to preserve the truth enshrined in the latter. I am urging upon believers the possibility of genuine holiness that is sufficiently inclusivist to allow the incorporation of sanctified thinking, holy action, genuine words that bear witness to God’s work as sanctifier of those who have been sanctifying themselves (Hebrews 2.11).

Set against the ever present burning up of precious life on the altar of DVD, TV viewing & u-tube, mobile phones, tweeting, twittering and face-book sharing the practice of the presence of God has taken a profound set-back. The old danger of 90 minutes at a football match or at the cinema or a dance or the local is nothing to the peril inveighed by new foes that have arisen to chain our souls and steal our hearts and minds from converse with God. I am not saying that a

man or woman must bin all mod cons but we must be aware where the torrent of electronic innovation is carrying us. Remember those who sought to live holy were borne along by a far different energy-namely by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I am not party to the presumption that man is without sin or that any individual continues to perfectly please God subsequent to becoming aware God has imputed to him or her the righteousness of Christ.

I am, however, saying that scripture gives warrant for believing that we can be holy and are enabled to live holy lives where we fulfil the will of God which is our sanctification. I am on the side of holy living, imparted righteousness, conquest of covetousness and joyful service inspired and enabled by the Holy Spirit

I am further saying that we are *to live in holiness* as did those persons of the scriptures who walked with God and *not to strive for or pursue holiness in a very different sense as if it were a cheetah speeding ahead of us*. This is the “persecution” of holiness as an all consuming aim. Paul indeed talks to Timothy of the “pursuit” in 1 Timothy 6.11 & 2 Timothy 2.22 and books have been written after a certain style on this subject. What I would say is that Paul is urging upon Timothy that godliness that is content in God and free from covetousness and other loves. He then erects for Timothy and the church some signposts along the holiness pathway and refers to the “beautiful agony of the faith” to witness faithfully the persecutions of the day as did our Lord in the presence of Pontius Pilate. In the second letter to Timothy Paul erects further signposts when he has challenged his young friend to “present himself to God as one approved ...an instrument for special purposes made holy useful to the Master and prepared for each good work.”

Vessels only blessed Master
Yet with all thy wondrous power
Flowing through us
Thou dost use us
Every day and every hour.

TREATMENT

- (1) First an excursus into traditional reformed doctrine of sin to investigate if there is enough room in the traditional understanding for holiness as God’s power to keep the saint in face of the lusts of the flesh the trials of the world and the strategy of Satan. Put another way does the 17th century doctrinal basis give too little cognisance to the emphasis God lays in scripture on the possibility propagation and perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord (2Corinthians 7.1)
- (2) Second, I give consideration to what “walking with God” means and how we are to understand the idea of “a man of God” and “holy women”. Are men and women considered “holy” on account of their walk and intimacy with God and were the prophets chosen to model God’s ways in Old Testament times much as the apostles of the New Testament?
- (3) Third, an examination of the principles of that life taught by Christ who was the perfect model of holiness. The analysis includes highlights from the life Jesus lived out for over 3 years with His apostles.
- (4) Fourth and strategically most important a short coverage of apostolic teaching in the New Testament.
- (5) Fifth, using extracts from the holiness teaching of *J.D. Drysdale* (late principal of the then Birkenhead Bible College) on the *parables of Jesus* as a basis I have engaged with a more thoroughgoing descriptor of holiness than traditional holiness by gradation. My reason for doing this is that I deeply suspect that we are affianced to *a snakes and ladders type of holiness* today and one that is not at all coordinate with the charms of

face-book. We need to re-engage with God and so with biblical holiness fragrant with commitment expectations and greater immediacy than the 21st century Church is teaching or prepared to teach. The question “How deep shall the gospel go?” has to be answered by every believer. Is the heart and fount of desires able to be renewed or recreated after the will of God? Did the Lord and His apostles see maturity of holiness in the Christian life developing after say 20 years of grace given? What of those young apostles at Pentecost? What of those holy men who carried Stephen to burial? Is the holiness now taught much like a piece by piece knitted garment with lots of dropped stitches? The writer is persuaded that the concept of the work of the Holy Ghost purging and purifying the heart must have its essential place in Christian teaching and theology.

- (6) A final analysis of the principal characteristics of holiness and a presentation of the means by which holiness is to be sought.

(1) DOSSE NON DECCARE AND PROTESTANT ORTHODOX THINKING CALVIN TO WHITEFIELD

John Calvin (16th Century) at root was a theologian who placed the strongest accent on faith exercised in the promises of God with the framework of the higher doctrine of a sovereign covenant keeping God. Calvinism has become known under the “Tulip” slogan which summarises the 19th century Calvinist stance under five heads:-

The **Total Depravity** or corruption of man. Sin has left no area of man’s being untouched. This doctrine is demonstrable.

The **Unconditional election** of God. God did not elect “good” people or act on our behalf because of anything seen in us. Election is generally taught in connection with the ultimate destiny of saints but not in relation to being “*predestined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son*” (Romans 8.29). In the endeavour to declare the moral neutrality of God in election theologians have regrettably neglected the holy ends implicit in election. The whole effect does not make God more fair but rather introduces a maverick factor. Election has to be coordinate with the pre-determined end of Christ-likeness and *ipso facto holiness is essential to Christianity*.

Limited atonement – a doctrine balancing the warranties of the cross and those who shall seek God and experience imputed righteousness. It eschews the view that Christ died for all. The least commendable feature of this doctrine is that it imposes a man-made economy of scale on the love and mercy of God who is not willing that any should perish. The availability of the benefits of Christ’s atonement being trans continental and trans historical and trans racial and without social boundaries is divinely established and imposes no effective margins on grace but effectual or actual margins are created by receiving or not receiving the gospel.

Irresistible grace – the doctrine that the force of the human will must bend to the advances of God’s claims. To buy into this doctrine is to consent to a two for one theological package the second of which is “doubled predestination”. The predestining of those who would reject the gospel must impact negatively on the just judgment of the lost – that balance of humanity known to God that would not receive the gospel whose destiny is a given intertwined with His foreknowledge. *If however the human will is created free to choose of reject the gospel and in that context the schemes and power of Satan are known and subject to divine sovereignty* the judgment of the rebellious is just. The lost must take ownership of his failed destiny.

The **Perseverance of the saints**. This doctrine promotes the statement “Once saved always saved” but is little used in connection with holiness. Apostasy is the surd it cannot relish in its truncated form but it is sustainable if we state the doctrine as “*The perseverance of the saints who continue not moved from the hope of the gospel*” (John 15.5-6, Hebrews 10 38-9, Hebrews 6 4-6, Col.11.22-23). *Prevenient grace does not override the agency of the will but may strengthen it so that it is effectual in the saved only.*

To some extent Whitefield (the 18th Century preacher) as a Calvinistic Methodist maintained the doctrine of holiness alongside the basics of the later 19th century theological position outlined above. He preached for 33 years and lived in all 55 years. Whitefield, however, demurred on “limited atonement” insofar as he declared that the sovereignty of God combined satisfactorily with the free offer of salvation to all who would believe on Christ.

CALVINISTIC CONCESSIONS TO “DOSSE NON DECCARE” ARE SERIOUSLY LACKING

One of the big issues of Calvinistic thought is to accommodate to *holiness of life and victory* as a characteristic feature of Christian experience. I suggest some ground for holy living and sanctification may be retrieved under the 5th petal of Tulip but the high emphasis of this predominant school is neither espoused to nor readily compliant with a coordinate of holiness and the effect is to put clear water between early church teaching and Calvinistic thought. If “*the will of God is our sanctification*” (1Thessalonians 4.3) a far more radical approach to the doctrine of holiness is required. The Orthodox Fathers preferred to deal with Justification Adoption and Sanctification *as a bundle* and avoided any significant attention to sanctification and the doctrine of holiness. They called it “renewing” and balanced it by a strong recognition of “not apprehending” (Phil.3.18). The Orthodox Fathers quoted 5 blessings attendant upon the 3 operations of the Spirit of God namely *assurance, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and perseverance*. This quiver of blessings I heartily consent to but would have the issue move on from simply “persevering” to “*perfecting holiness* in the fear of the Lord” (2Corinthians 7.1 and Ephesians 4.12). One needs to be convinced that there is salvation in the “power” of the gospel of the Cross; there is healing in the stripes of Christ, there is “completing of holiness” in the cross, there is the power to purify the heart and dissolve covetousness in the cross. Of the ten men I have chosen to write about who lived out a holy confession as recorded in the Old Testament at least six modelled that holiness in the busy years of their early life.

THE 1646 SHORTER CATECHISM

I have dared to call this document “**It is possible not to sin**” in contradistinction to the theological trend supported by the confessions of Protestant Orthodoxy and specifically the 82nd question of the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Divines which reads “No *mere* man since the Fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God *but doth daily break them in thought word and deed.*”

PROOF TEXTS FOR WHAT THEY ARE WORTH

When one looks at the proof texts afforded by the compilers of the Catechism we are given two and they are not especially fit for purpose. The first is (i) *Ecclesiastes 7.20* “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not” along with (ii) *Psalms 14.3* “They are all gone aside. They are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one!”. The burden of proof that *every man sins in three manners daily* is settled upon these two texts by the Protestant Orthodox Fathers. The *Comment* given is that the only exceptions are Christ, Adam pre-fall and the saints in glory. Is this correct and does indisputable proof of *daily sin* on the part of all mankind lie in these two verses? Having checked in adequately on these two biblical bases we shall later look at other scriptures that tend to resolve the matter of holy living in a far more positive manner?

ORTHODOX PROOF TEXT No.1

We have to observe that Paul in *Romans 3* does quote Ecclesiastes 7 and makes it do service to prove the *natural man* a sinner. His aim is no more or less than that of Solomon to show that man in his original estate from the fall and without Christ is without defence under the charge of being a sinner in breach of God’s law.

SPIRITUAL WISDOM AFFORDS STRENGTH

Wisdom makes one man stronger than ten city rulers. Nevertheless there is not a righteous man on earth who does well and does not sin. *This verse is one of six references to Ecclesiastes in the NT and is quoted in Romans 3.10-12 by the Apostle Paul who says, "As it is written, "There is none righteous no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."*

SOLOMON'S ROMANS 7 -TYPE EXPERIENCE

Also do not give your heart to all the matters that people say lest you hear your own servant cursing you. But you also know in your heart there are many occasions when you cursed people in the past. All this is I have continually put to the test in the past. **I said** (Hebrew *רמא* "I thought"), "I will be wise"(or *spiritually wise*) and this was far from me or "thrust away from me" *Solomon finds himself in exactly the position of Paul in Romans: Paul expresses it thus, "What I want to do I do not but what I hate I do" [Romans 7.15]"When I want to do good evil is right there with me"[Romans 7.21] Paul's analysis is..."I find another law[the law of sin] waging war against the law of my mind". Solomon also sees the conflict-he feels the sadness-he knows that his spiritual desires are being corrupted by sinful thoughts which like seed appear and grow in the heart.* Whatever the wealth (of wisdom) is it is far away and depth of depth. Who will or might discover it? *Solomon is comparing wisdom to treasure to be mined and advising that it lies at great depth and requires search.*

SOLOMON'S BIG TURN-AROUND

I turned right round (or) I transferred my heart to personal experience of God and to investigate or explore (Hebrew *רצת*) compelled to seek (Hebrew infinitive imperative singular of *vqb* "to seek") wisdom. *The imperative here gives the lie to the vast change of tack. Solomon is going deeper into God and not the world around. In God lie the depths and who but the Spirit of God can enable this exploration?* and the plan (of God) (Hebrew *בב* complex tapestry) and to know or expect the violence of a great fool (Hebrew *לס*) and the fruitless frustrating folly(Hebrew *לס*) of proud celebration or Lucifer-like glory (*the opposite of humble praise-although there is just a Hebrew # of difference between Hallel and Hallel [לל...לל]*) *Solomon certainly is now dealing in profundities. I find the woman who is hunting or lying in wait with traps more bitter than death; her heart devoted to destruction (Hebrew *מר* "contracted" is the opposite of "consecration *לל*); her arms bonds or a prison.*

The **good man who pleases God** will slip away from her but she will take **the sinner** for herself. *Solomon is reflecting on such conduct as the book of Genesis approves in the life of Joseph. He is turning to scripture for the answers as the Spirit leads him and is close to the solution Paul states in Romans 8. He is not urging that Man united with the Saviour perpetually and irrevocably fails. He is stating that victory is achievable. Paul in Romans 8 carries the same message. Thus I urge that the text quoted in its context does not prove that man must needs be unholy daily. Solomon in his wisdom is not, I think, speaking with one voice with the Protestant theologians of the 17th century.*

ORTHODOX PROOF TEXT No.2

To take the second negative of spiritual victory and imparted righteousness walking to all pleasing let us now look at the second text used by the Protestant Orthodox Fathers as their proof that all (including God's own saints) do sin daily "in thought word and deed". They take their proof from *Psalm 14.3. First, I have to say that it is the Psalm about a fool who does not so much as know God much less care to live a holy life. I invite you to follow my commentary to find if David is really affording fuel to the "non posse non peccare" theologians.*

THE FOOL'S HEART

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God". For David there is no question about the existence of God-only about whether He is treasured in the heart of the righteous man or rejected and despised in the heart and affections of the foolish. For David, Nabal was the quintessence of "folly". This man showed wanton lack of appreciation of his wife and servants and of the God of Elijah who saved Israel from idolatry close to his Carmel fields.

The word "fool" in Hebrew means "to wither", "to die".

*The owl atheism sails on obscene wings across the noon
Drops his blue fringed lids and shuts them
And hoots at the glorious sun in heaven
Crying out, "Where is it?"*

They are prodigals; they have enacted repeated "abominable rollings." (Both Hebrew terms *b[t* and *l l* are terms used for overt sexual acts) **None does good.** This phrase is used by Paul to describe the **total corruption of natural man**

*A desert without an oasis, a night without a star
A dunghill without a jewel a hell without a bottom
(Spurgeon writes this of **the wicked**)*

THE LORD AT HEAVEN'S BALCONY 2-3

The LORD looked from heaven's window to see if any prudent one were in existence. Here is the humour of David-showing the reality of God's existence-but confirming the disappearance of the good man from among the brigade of fools. God was looking for two things, "those who turned their minds" to him; who "**taught doctrine**" on the one hand and on the other those who "**tramped their way to God**" or "**frequented His presence.**" **A wider look than among the foolish would of course yield fruit and David for one was both teacher of truth and lover of the house of God.**

NO PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 4-6

Have all those who undertake deep evil (in the moral sphere) no experience.(i.e. intimacy in the spiritual sphere)? **They are devouring my people as they swallow their food. They do not call on the living God for help, invoke or celebrate him.** At the time they need help they fear a great fear. Joseph Addison in the "Tattler" preserves a rare passage on the hardened sinner. He writes, "The ship began to roll. The atheist fell to his knees and confessed to the chaplain that he never believed till that day there was a god. One of the hardest tars said, "Throw him overboard". The wind fell. Two days later on land the man denied he had ever repented-he went to a duel-was run through-then again he became as good a Christian as when at sea-but finding he was but superficially struck he turned into one of England's greatest freethinkers." **The Orthodox Fathers may well prove from this psalm that all foolish atheists displease God and that daily but that does not carry their point but rather proves their ineptitude.**

THE LORD IS PRESENT AND REAL 5-7

Through the circuit of the years of the righteous the Lord is present. You evil ones put to shame the counsel of the poor but the LORD is his refuge. The LORD provides & has provided salvation to Israel from Zion. The LORD is in the house of the returning of the returnings of His people. Jacob will dance, Israel will be glad. Here David counters the atheist and supplies the ultimate answer. First the believer is conscious of the LORD through all his days. Second the poor has real backbone and values the teaching he has received. Third the Living LORD who turned His people back in the revival days of Nehemiah and in the 1948 returnings will come back amongst them Himself in accordance with the promise given to Moses in Deuteronomy 30.5. In that return to end all returns old Jacob will be there and the nation of

Israel will be there and the Lord Himself will be there-and every knee shall bow and they shall all know the Lord and there will not be an atheist in sight. David is one who practiced the presence of God and sought to praise the Lord and make his name known. He sets this truth in relief even in the 14th psalm which descants on atheism. Neither Paul nor Spurgeon applied the psalm to the Christian but to the natural man.

THE ORTHODOX FATHERS' ESCAPE CLAUSE

The Shorter Catechism answer says "No *mere man* is able to keep the commands of God but daily breaks them in thought word and deed." We have to ask what is a "mere man". "Mere" has the significance of "only" or "alone" and so a chink appears in the armour of this wholesale bleak theological portrait of man. The grudging possibility is glimpsed that a man might have "a good day" or even "walk with God" but this possibility is not accompanied by any balancing scripture but left implicit and muted.

A MODERN PLAUSIBLE "NON POSSE NON PECCARE" PRESENTATION

David Pawson offers the following categories of the Christian—"a man with a sinful nature living the life of God in his soul" to borrow a phrase from *Henry Scrougal*. Pawson's categories(found in "unlocking the Bible 1 John Page 1226) are very interesting but they do no, I think, wholly bottom the issue because they retain like much teaching a balance heavily tipped in favour of *human weakness* and titled against *divine power*. They are:-

Indisputable-we sin

Inevitable-we will sin (qualification "at one time or other")

Incompatible-we should not sin (the thesis of our weakness & antithesis of His strength renders the synthesis of what is actual compatible with what is right)

Intolerable-we must not sin

Indefensible-we need not sin (eminently defensible)

Inapplicable (isn't "we do not sin" is normative)

Inconceivable-we cannot sin.

I have set the categories that could be quite differently expressed in bold type.

(2) THE POSSE NON PECCARE WITNESS SPANS BIBLICAL HISTORY

I shall then make reference to the lives of ten biblical men mightily *moved by the Holy Spirit* whose lives and words I will cite in favour of holy living that provide us lesser but effective models of holiness that would appear to fly in the face of the "non posse non peccare" theory.

The common denominators in the lives before us is *love or compassion; converse* (prayer as seeking and seeing the face of God and listening to God); *commitment to ministry* and *compulsion and burning zeal* that carried them life long as people fitted for the purpose of God by the Holy Spirit

- (i) **Enoch** who walked with God was attune to the divine mind and as a prophet. We can take it that after the birth of his son Methuselah he modelled the godly walk and witnessed by prophecy to what the Holy Spirit revealed to him speaking of the final unveiling on earth of the kingdom of our Lord. He overcame the world as it was by faith.
- (ii) **Joseph** the dreamer may be described as one who kept his garments unspotted fleeing from the schemes of Potiphar's wife. He was the son of a man who despite his earlier stratagems had a Peniel experience with God and the intimacy between Jacob and Joseph must have caused the younger man to recognise the angel of the presence of God—the pre-incarnate Christ as having brought decisive change so that Jacob became a "prince with God". He lived in victory

- (iii) That meek man **Moses** equally lived out his testimony day by day. He is described by God as “my servant” so that his obedience was exceptional and recognised despite those failures to which scripture testifies so that we might resist the idea of “sinless perfection” whilst joyfully adhering to the truth of holiness. Moses taught the law and the holiness code of Leviticus 17-19 and established the offerings system and ceremonial law as testimony to sin and its consequences. Moses anointed the High-priest Aaron, erected the tabernacle, put in place the annual spring and autumn feasts, raised the serpent in the wilderness and pointed to the Saviour in numerous Torahs or pointers. He breathed the wish that all God’s people might be prophets and treasured the experience Jacob had of the “face of God” and being “a prince with God” as he spoke of “our Peniel” (PENUEL) in Genesis 32.31. Sadly, the New NIV misses the significance of Moses emphatic plural possessive use, presumably viewing it as a textual error! Moses died by the kiss and in the embrace of the Lord. This great man is known almost frivolously in “street cred” speech as “Holy Moses” but truly he deserves the nomenclature. He lived with grave burdens but his faith failed not. So the Hebrew writer says “By faith Moses...”
- (iv) **David**, the man who loved to spend time in the courts of the Lord is remembered for his faith victory over Goliath and his sordid action in the Bathsheba affair to which the Spirit allows all history access to show that none is without sin and to show conversely that forgiveness is available and a holy life may still be lived. David’s psalmody on the other hand gives testimony to his desire for God and holiness. He writes “Create in me a pure Heart O God”. David’s warfare was largely a life of victory save in the Rabbah affair which is connected to his sin with Bathsheba. This itself serves as a parable of his life of holiness and joy and the associate warning of besetting sin which marred his otherwise fair testimony. David desired to be a gatekeeper at the house of God and spent his later life providing materials for the house of God so that his people might treasure the presence of God and live holy lives for generations to come. He revelled in the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His prayers are recorded in many psalms and his walk with God is there for all to see. He lived in victory
- (v) **Jeremiah** the prophet to whom God spoke 300 times and who prayed for his people till the Lord himself called a halt was a great man of God who believed in “circumcision of the heart”-that deep work of God the Holy Spirit (Jer.4.4). Amid tears he stood firm despite a series of three imprisonments. Here is the saintly soul’s response to the divine chiding in his 9th prayer. He says: 1) IS THERE TO BE REJECTION OR CONTEMPT FOR JUDAH? 2) ARE YOU REJECTING HER WITH ZION WHOM YOUR SOUL ABHORS? 3) WHY HAVE YOU STRUCK US WHEN THERE IS NONE TO HEAL? 4) MUST THERE BE CONTINUAL HOPING [*Piel infinitive or imperative of hmq*] FOR PEACE AND NO GOOD COMES? 5) MUST THERE BE HOPING SAVE FOR A TIME OF HEALING AND BEHOLD SUDDEN CALAMITY? O LORD WE ARE VERY CONSCIOUS OF OUR WICKEDNESS-THE INIQUITY OF OUR FATHERS FOR WE OURSELVES HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU! DO NOT "GIVE OCCASION FOR BLASPHEMY" OR "REPROACH" [*xan*] YOUR NAME. DO NOT CAUSE YOUR GREAT THRONE TO "FADE AND FALL" [*lbn*] LIKE THE LEAVES OF A TREE *The point here is that Jeremiah who is forbidden to pray on behalf of the people prays for God's glory. He prays against the short-term view of God's glorious throne that men might entertain-in fact many probably had taken such a view. He sought to space the*

LORD from the monarchs of the land as the true continuing sovereign who should remain glorious. Remember and do not break YOUR COVENANT IS WITH US. IS THERE PROVISION OF HEAVY RAIN IN THE IDOLS OF THE NATIONS? DO THE HEAVENS OF THEMSELVES PROVIDE GREAT (RAINS)? NO! IT IS YOU O LORD OUR GOD AND WE HOPE IN YOU FOR YOU CREATE ALL THESE. When Jeremiah asked God to "do something!" he believed with all his heart that the LORD alone was the hope of the nation in this awesome time of war and famine. C. S. Lewis has it "God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks to us in our conscience but shouts in our pains—it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world". *The Hebrew language does not support the "whisper" bit.* God both whispers in our downcast moments to raise us up as with Elijah and he whispers in our distress as when the fig tree and vine bore no fruit. *The Lord whispered well over 100 times to Jeremiah words of comfort and explanation.* The saintly life of Jeremiah stood in the gap for his people setting out his prayer 17 times for the nation and coming under the burden of their sins in his love for his people.

- (vi) **Elijah** listened to God's whisper when at Horeb he slept in the cave and came out to hear God speak and ask what he was doing there. The whole narrative reads very much like a premier of the resurrection with the prophet emerging from sleep like the Lord from the tomb. The voice of God is described in Hebrew as a plaintive voice of one crying. At Horeb Elijah who walked with the Lord discovered that the Lord bore the sorrows of the nation in her persecutions but equally the Lord was set on a course of renewing leadership for the future. Elijah's prayer for rain declares his perseverance of faith and victory whilst his downcast spirit shows that the loveliest holiest of our race may be shattered by persecution but God provides angels and even speaks Himself to his saints in their darkest hours.
- (vii) **Daniel** was a man of prayer. We have no notices of his failures though we must consider he would have recognised himself a sinner. His converse with God thrice daily and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in revealing to him the progress of human history and kingdoms toward the realisation of the kingdom of God is outstanding evidence of God's desire to share his secrets with this holy man. Daniel's holiness extended to dietary detail and fasting. He is coupled with other great intercessors of history as an outstanding man of prayer and of God. He lived in victory
- (viii) **John the Baptist** who was filled with the Spirit from His mother's womb. Of this most steadfast man Jesus said "No greater man was born of woman". He taught his disciples to pray as a vital part of godliness and also to fast. He preached against sin and heralded righteousness and Christ. His doubt concerning Jesus as Messiah during his terrible incarceration is shown to us by the Spirit of God so that we may see how faith is shaken under persecution but also how it is bolstered effectively by the word and encouragement of Christ given to John through his disciples who visited Jesus. John even then sent to the source of hope and found peace and renewed joy in believing before the sword fell and carried him to Abraham's bosom. He lived in victory
- (ix) **Stephen**, the man full of grace and power with the face of an angel of whom we read in Acts 6-7. His radiant face was itself testimony to the beauty of holiness in his character and his exposition of scripture showed he had prophetic gifting. He was a man filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom as scripture attests.
- (x) **Paul** who wrote of the life of the over-comer to the Romans was a man who practiced the holiness he preached. He provides over 300 way marks or signs that serve to guide the Christian who is walking before the Lord like Abraham - in his *curriculum*, if you like.

- (xi) **The Encourager** who wrote of perfection's sacred height (I refer to Hebrew 7.11, 7.25, 7.28, 11.40, and 12.2) to the Hebrews sees Jesus as central to our moral and spiritual perfection and in this perseverance and suffering have their part (10.32-39). This saintly man gives 18 significant encouragements to holiness in his letter. Amongst these are encouragements to study, to prayer, to "go on to perfection(6.1), to affirm our hope in the risen Lord, to unswerving confessing the name, to provoking one another to good works, to love despite vicissitudes, to bear reproach for Christ., to be engaged in praise and that each should become an exhorter of others.
- (xii) **The beloved disciple John** who spoke uncompromisingly in his first epistle of the possibility of living in victory over sin. Under the section on the holy life of the apostles his teaching is dealt with. His holiness is attested in the commission given when Mary was allotted to his care. His devotion to Christ is attested by his leaning on the bosom of Christ at supper. His faithfulness and perseverance are rewarded by a visit of Christ Himself to Patmos to lay his hand of blessing on the elderly saint who pleased the Lord.

Come Holy Ghost our hearts inspire
 Let us Thine influence prove
 Source of the old prophetic fire
 Fountain of life and love

Come Holy Ghost for moved by Thee
 The prophets wrote and spoke
 Unlock the truth, Thyself the key
 Unseal the sacred book. (Charles Wesley)

(3) THE POSSE NON PECCARE LIFE WAS WATCHED FOR THREE YEARS

The door of the possibility of holiness first appeared in the model of Christ's life. We could say that the life of Christ was a level above "posse non peccare" status and that it was "not possible for Him to sin". What we do know is that there were two opinions about that.

First, the Holy Spirit was fully confident that our precious Lord would conquer the temptations of Satan at three levels-that of the flesh, the world and that of an absolute sell out to the devil himself. **Christ was thrust out into the desert by the Holy Spirit** as the ambassador of God's wisdom and power. He walked in step with the Spirit. On the other hand the devil supposed he might entrap the Lord and started by playing to the bodily craving for food which is the principal physical desire.. The devil proceeded to hold up worldly prestige or acclaim before the Son of God who came to serve and to suffer in death. The devil then unfolded his grand design "at a moment in future time" which could be early and seriously promoted without hindrance, so he thought, with Christ submissive. After 3000 years of experience Satan was intrepid in strategy but he failed hands down to entrap our Lord. What was there about the Son of God that was so effective against Satan? The life of our Lord is one where we see the Spirit operating without limit or measure(John3.34)

Second, **Jesus Christ was in daily converse with the Father** and in a sense dwelt in the heavenlies. (Luke 4.42 Matthew 14.23,John 3.13 *Not in the 2010 translation* and John 20 17) . The prayer life of our Lord was in the nature of a life of commitment or vow. The daily action of the Saviour was full divine engagement of the triune God. Thus the Spirit of God who had come down as a wrestler from heaven to do combat with Satan settled upon our Lord's person as a dove for as Noah's dove found no resting place but the ark so the Holy Spirit found no perfection but

the lamb of God. The best proof of Jesus daily converse is the Lord's prayer the first petition of which reads "Give us this day our *daily* bread". Christ was in daily converse with the Father.

Third, *Christ's life exhibited compassion or agape love*. We read again and again that our Lord had compassion on those around him(Matthew 15.32, Matthew 20.34, Mark 5.19, Mark 9.22, Luke 7.13, We read of the Lord in Lamentations 3.22 that "His compassions are new every morning". Those of our Lord were in evidence hourly which is to say over 14,000 times during His glorious ministry and that would be a gross understatement.

Fourth, Christ was utterly obedient to the will of God. This was not a wooden sanctification nor a grudging obeisance. Our Lord revelled or delighted in doing the will of the Father. When the Hebrew writer speaks of the glory of Christ he says "You loved righteousness and hated wickedness and therefore God anointed you with the oil of joy and set you above your companions. He did Gods will in an extraordinary and unparalleled act of love and sacrifice and said "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give his life a ransom for many."

Fifth, He declared the word of God and lived as the Word of God. He modelled exactly what he said and his teaching has the ultimate ring of truth in that it was lived out and is meant to be lived out and can be lived out to the glory of God.

(4) THE APOSTLES ADHERE TO THE POSSE NON PECCARE CREDENTIAL OF THE FAITH

First let us survey vital elements of apostolic thought which I believe throw open the converse option and make room for holiness as it is "possible not to sin".

THE UNCOMMON BUT MUTUAL EXPERIENCE OF THE APOSTLES

To diverge into the by-path meadow of debating a "second experience" is not the way I see the vital maelstrom of this issue. It is sheer fact that the experience of receiving Christ at the new birth is coordinate with development and also maturity. Because the spiritual mind operating by love forgiveness and humility etc. and spiritual fruit as purity is consequent upon the operation of the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life and members volunteered as a living sacrifice and not merely knowledge based the curve to maturity may be *far more critical than gradual*. The vital factors are (i) The operation of the Spirit of God under the law of the Spirit of Life laying claim in our hearts and minds to a life laid on the altar. (ii) The watchfulness of devotion that factors in *listening and talking to God* in such Christian walk and "*converse*" and experience as parallels that of Enoch Abraham and all the biblical saints (iii) The deliberate consecration of our members to the Lord (iv) The creation in our souls of that love that works by faith and daily tends toward victory (v) The operation of God the Holy Ghost "moving" within whilst unwilling to project us into trial above that we are able yet "thrusting" us into the path of conflict empowered by the whole panoply of God coordinate with prayer which renders His resources ever immanent. This cannot classify as a shallow experience or the mediocrity that leaves the highest and best well alone -it calls for a genuine apostolic aspiration and holds it is attainable.

PAUL PROMOTED HOLINESS

Though Paul gave multiple instructions to the churches his teaching on holiness is not to be thought of as *a process of putting in place all the rules-cum-exhortations* he provides. Any thorough study will show that he describes the path of holiness by such principles that might be described if in an over-simplification by the map of scripture, the companionship of the Spirit, the mobile of prayer and the motor acceleration of the Holy Spirit. I have reckoned his practical sections in the epistles contain at least 320 instructions and encouragements -half as many as the

rules the Jews attached to the Torah. Despite all these I insist that Paul's doctrine of holiness was not built on rules—indeed in Colossians 2 he dismisses “Do not's” and everywhere he commends holiness as the will of God. Texts you will find useful are 1Cor10.13; 2 Cor10.13; Gal.5 16,22,25; Eph.2.10,21,3.16-20,4.20-24,5.18,6.11; Phil.1.9,2,5; Col 1.9-10,2.10.2.19,4.12; 1Thess.4.3; 2Thess.2.13; 1Tim1.5,4.17; 2Tim 1.9,2.19; Titus1.15, 2.12,2.14.

THE MODEL AND THE PURITY OF THE BRIDE

Believers think of Christ as doing the transformation we choose to neglect and so render us holy in His sight in heaven or render us pure at the rapture. This is not a bible concept. Christ desires a spotless bride at his coming as well as through eternal ages. Holiness is not to be dismissed as decadent Christendom discounts it in this present evil age. We are to shine as lights in the darkness not to be comprehended in it.

Paul commended the model of Christ in Ephesians 4.20-24 as in 1Tim4.12 and Titus2.12 and invited believers to follow him insofar as he modelled Christ (Eph.5.1 with Philippians 3.12)). His stance on holiness is firm. It is built on holiness as the revealed “will of God” for us enabled by the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Colossians 2.10) and continuous converse with God (1Thess5.17). To the earliest Christians he instructed he says “May God himself the God of peace *sanctify you through and through* (HOLOTELEIS). May the spirit, soul and body of one and all of you have been guarded unblemished free from blame (perfect in its kind) at the coming or parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This high aspiration and prayer is characteristic of an apostle who prays for the church he taught for 3 years in the following manner “I pray He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray you *being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the Lord's holy people*, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ ...that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God...now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...to him be glory in the Church ...throughout all ages.” This prayer for a glorious radiant church that the Lord desires to present to himself “*cleansing her by the washing of water through the word* ..to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but *holy and blameless.*”(Eph5.26-27) is exactly mirrored by Jude as he pronounces his conviction about Gods power to enable a life lived daily to the glory of God “To Him *who is able to guard you as ones who do not fall into error or failure AND to present you in the event before his glorious presence without blame* and with great joy...to the only God our Saviour be glory and majesty power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and ever. Amen.” The apostles believed the near impossible was doable and the matter of living holy was not a pipedream but rather a purity to be experienced and demonstrated to the glory of God by the power of the Spirit—an life of service and humility daily “in step with the Spirit” was commended to all the churches.

THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS (PAUL)

In the book of Romans Paul does indeed describe the downgrade of humanity and the reality of man's sinful nature but he does not come to a standstill there as one bereaved of all good. The apostle goes on to describe “the law of the mind” and the “new nature” and the tremendous impact of the indwelling Spirit for holy living in Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 12. As a whirlwind took Elijah to heaven the power of the Spirit is able to divide the world that was from the world that now is mine to live in and effectively partition the saint of God from desires that once prevailed in the heart. The confessions of St Augustine stand testimony to this power and his answer to the inducement of the profligate woman he once loved which was “It is not I”.

HOLINESS WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUFFERING (PETER)

Though in another issue once at odds with Paul Peter the apostle stands shoulder to shoulder with him on holiness. He writes “As obedient children, do conform to the evil desires you had when

you lived in ignorance. **But just as he who called you is holy so be holy in all you do;** for it is written: “Be holy because I am holy”.(1.14-16) Again Peter writes “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply from the heart”.(1.22) Again he writes “Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” (2.12). As to the model of holiness and its standard Peter writes “If you suffer...to this you were called because Christ suffered for **you leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth**”.(2.21-2). Again Peter lays stress on utter holiness of life saying “Arm yourselves with the same attitude because **whoever suffers in the body is done with sin**(The idea is “to have done with” “to have no more will or desire for”. *Persecution is an unwelcome but effective way of producing steadfastness and strength through crisis*). As a result they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires but rather for the will of God(4.1-2).”

It is apt to remark that none of us escapes scot-free of suffering and that in many instances later life is laden with suffering. Though such suffering or trial may be health related and not born out of faithfulness to the gospel it makes the same demand upon us that we keep the faith with God who knows our frame and remembers we are dust. It makes the further demand that we rejoice in God in Christ who is able to keep us from falling and with the greatest distress will make a way that we may escape, Heroes and heroines as in Hebrews 11 and persons like *Joni Earikson Tada* and for me personally *David Crawford*—the man who preached from a coffin-like box and radiated Christ have demonstrated that this pathway makes sense in terms of obedience and experience of the presence of the Lord.

HOLINESS THROUGH FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST (JOHN)

The apostle John in his first epistle states “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin”.(1John2.1) The aorist active subjunctive is indeed singular but that does not spring the trap of the clear meaning for John desires what he says as any parent desires a child to do no wrong. John shows the incompatibility of walking in darkness and living in the light. He is emphatic on fellowship and speaking from the experience of living so close to Jesus that his way of life was not just witnessed but adopted by the power of the spirit. John can say “If we **walk in the light** as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin”(1.7) The verb is as *John Stott* said “present” from which he understood that “process cleansing” is intended. but the text is speaking of those “walking in the light” so the intent must be in another direction. I submit since the verb is **KATHARIZO** not **KATHAIRO** it has the additional “**swift**” intent of so “purifying” that the believers who so walk are as acutely –indeed as the apostles who touched Christ in the upper room and experienced Him breathing the Spirit upon them and later apportioning to each the fire of holiness they were brought immediately to live out the life of love in boldness and without covetousness as the account in Acts bears out beyond a quibble. People then took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

EXCURSUS ON INSUFFLATION(INBREATHED SPIRITUAL LIFE), ITS FORERUNNER AND AFTERMATH AND ITS RELATION TO JUDAS

- (a) **It is John who highlights the “inbreathing”. I believe it related to John 3 and that by now Jesus had brought the disciples not just to the understanding of the New Birth but now to gain its experience. It is notable that Judas did not receive the “in-breathing”.**
- (b) **Judas did accompany the disciples when on mission they found evil spirits were subject as the Holy Spirit worked “with” them. (Luke 10.20) Jesus then cautioned that they should be better pleased on account of their names being written in heaven. This caution is notable especially in the light of Luke 10.22. The Hebrew**

writer in detailing what evidences of spirituality can invest the life without absolute guarantee of continuance. He instances five.

- (1) A “Once” enlightenment John Chrysostom says “The heretics have baptism not light. PHOTIZMA means a beam of light akin to our meaning “I saw the light” i.e. a full mental understanding as Nicodemus ultimately had at night.
- (2) A “tasting” of the gift of heaven. This is Jesus and the life he give. To “taste” GEUSOMAI in the middle voice of the verb GEUO is to enjoy for oneself by personal experience the Saviour and his presence and benefits.
- (3) A partnership METOCHOS with the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained this carefully in John 13.30, 14.16-17 & 20.22. Partnerships like sharing can end and that of Judas did end.
- (4) A tasting or experience of the beautiful word and action of God. Again to refer to the life of Judas Iscariot he saw the act-word RHEMA of Jesus in action all around him and on mission saw demons cast out (Luke 10.17).
- (5) And even (TE) tasted of the “powers” DUNAMEIS of the age to come. The Hebrew writer would seem to have Judas in mind for the NT era was about to dawn and the mighty miracles shown forth in Jesus were not of the former OT age but of the new gospel age. Judas was involved in the heralding of these powers to Israel and realised the “potential”

All of this falls short of constituting “salvation”. As with Judas people today may fall into this category and disappear forever from Christian life and witness.

(c) The Baptism of power associated with Pentecost complements the “in-breathing of life and is synonymous with the increase of power and joy and holy boldness and new tongues and this gift would be with them forever” i.e. throughout their lives and the life of the church. When the Holy Spirit was “with them” on mission in Israel during three years in the profound company of the Lord who modelled holiness and power they had a striking foretaste of this age now breaking upon them in the glory of a new dawn long prophesied –the world then described as “that which was to come” was in orbit all around them.

John further descants on the great love of the Father and revels in the thought of what we shall be. He says “We know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Then he adds “All who have this hope in Him purify themselves just as He is pure”.(3.3) John further avers “No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning”. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him”.(3.6) John emphasises his teaching saying “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. No-one who is born of God will continue in sin, because *God’s seed remains in them*; they cannot go on sinning because they have been born of God”.(3 8b-9). If no other verse existed in the NT this verse proves that it is “possible not to sin.” The theological principle and basis of holiness is inescapable. God is not calling us to the impossible and has not given his Spirit to place holy seed within the human Spirit and mind to continue the devastating work of the devil and indulge the sameness of fleshly living and conformity to the world but for quite contrary reasons of heart holiness and fellowship with Him. John winds up by warning of apostasy(denial of Christ is counted as Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit-cf. Matt.10.32, Luke12.8) and also advising Christians to help keep the whole Christian scene one where any recognised sin is dealt with in love but despite this advice he re-emphasises that “We know that anyone born of God does not continue in sin; the one born of God guards himself and the evil one cannot harm him”. (5.18) Unfortunately the 2010 NIV alters the person (from “him” to “them”) and demurs on the reflexive pronoun(EATOU) to utterly alter the sense of this important conclusion to make the statement artificially compliant with the sceptical “non posse non peccare” concept to which I will not for a moment give place. The Wycliffe translation

has it “We know, that each man that is born of God, sinneth not; but the generation of God keepeth him, and the wicked toucheth him not.”

(5) LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW

It is inevitable that I will become aligned in the thinking of many with *John Wesley* but it must be insisted that though he did, I believe, seek to bring back an emphasis of the early Church he was pasted on the petard of preaching “sinless perfection.” That doctrine has no indemnity but to preach “sinful imperfection” as if this were to be the norm from new birth to arrival in heaven and is inured in the negativity of having *no holiness message* for here and now. Regrettably this is the *de facto* position of many who cite the two petals of *Tulip* - namely, “total corruption” and “universal sinfulness as if it were possible to deduce from them the impossibility of perfecting holiness in the believer’s life.” This has to change or we will hit our target of *daily sin* and demonstrate to the world a universally *failed Christianity* with an irreparable malady at its heart- *we will hold up to the world a perfect mirror of itself*-we will be a *worldly church* swirling around in fleshly lust and open to all the devices of Satan because we are totally *out of step with the Holy Spirit*.

A CRITIQUE OF HOLINESS TEACHING

It is ever a joy to know men and women who personify the holy life. *Stanley Banks*, principal of the former Birkenhead Bible College was one of a number of outstanding radiant Christians I have known. The life of Stanley Banks modelled the doctrine he preached and taught so thoroughly and the fire of the baptism of the Holy Ghost burned within his life and teaching. He succeeded to the leadership of the college upon the retirement of his father-in-law father in law,

A VITAL ASPECT OF PARABLE

Before advancing to offer extended comment on the treatment of our Lord’s parables by *JDD* the ground of parabolic teaching should I think be re-worked. First this idiom was dark and enigmatic. Parables were called “dark sayings”. The disciples once said to Jesus “now you use no parable you speak plainly”(John 16.29). Yet our Lord made extensive use of parable. The fact is that the earthly truth was popular and made one think whether about sheep or seeds or houses or lamps or whatever. I rather fancy this was the way God taught Adam at the creation of the world as maybe the intent of the prophetic understanding and Jesus saying in Matthew 13.35. Nonetheless Jesus chose to do second sessions with his disciples on most of his parabolic teaching although we have only a few of these recorded.(Mark4.34, Matthew 13.36-43). “The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” bit was not embedded in the stories but ran parallel and required those who were taught to think of a holier world where for instance the “thief” could be the Lord himself taking his servants to a world where sin would be no more and the “sower” could be Jesus who gave His life a ransom that He might reap a harvest of sanctified ones. In a curious but wonderful way the parables introduce us to the world of Jesus-a world of holiness. This is why *Drysdale’s* treatment(though he does not explore the groundwork) is more valuable than he himself may have known)

JDD, whose writings on the parables relate to fundamental teaching on victorious and holy living. The following section is an analysis and gentle critique of the main elements of his teaching. My exploration of *the work of the Holy Spirit* in the Christian life proceeds to clarify biblical teaching as a *grand synthesis* emerges in divine revelation that possesses a glorious dynamic and can deal with the scary “givens” of the human situation and condition. These are the given reality of man’s sinfulness since the fall, the continued power of Satan even as predicted to increase in the end times, the pervasive and persuasive pull of the world ever threatening to suck you and me into an iniquitous sink and the seemingly indefensible and corrupt nature of the

workings of the human mind and heart. In face of all these the incorporation of benefits of the historical acts of Christ's redemption and the gift and baptism of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian can and does produce the new normal and divinely intentioned actuality of joy and true holiness against those odds-the guile of Satan and demonic powers, the ever present pull of the world about us and the lusts of the flesh-each of them (but only apparently) immovable and invincible forces.

(a) HOLINESS IS HEARTWORK THAT PRODUCES BEAUTY OF LIFE & CHARACTER (THE PERFECTION OF LIGHT EXPELS ALL DARK)

The point of entry for *JDD* to the understanding and practice of holiness was the "LIGHTED CANDLE" teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5 15-16 and Luke 11.33-36. What the Lord taught proceeds on the principle that the Lord is the Light of the World and we alike are to be reflective lights of the same sort like prisms exhibiting the moral and spiritual beauty of Jesus. *Secret discipleship* is a misnomer and lacks the courage and joy to radiate Christ and may be "believe-ism". *JDD* characterises it as "caused by "indwelling sin" –"the quisling" or "secret sin" though one must carefully ascertain if there is sufficient teaching available or whether abatement of fear is a factor. The antidote to such secrecy is the power of the Holy Ghost or guest (Acts 1.8) and the *purifying of the heart* which is double-minded (James 4.8). Lord Chesterfield returned from visiting *Fenelon* remarked "If I had stayed another day in his presence I am afraid I would have had to become a Christian...his spirit was so pure attractive, so beautiful." *JDD* refers to a young convert who did nothing for Jesus because he was just a learner. Challenged to be a candle he had soon lead 50 persons to the Saviour. Christ's life was a radiant life and its influence was everywhere telling.

Some lives are drear from doubts and fear
While others merely plod;
But lovely faces mark the men
Who walk and talk with God.

(b) HOLINESS AS ZEAL AND LOVE THAT PASSES OVER HURT (THE PERFECTION OF DIVINE DYNAMIC OR POWER (DUNAMIS) OVERWHELMS ALL OBSTACLES

Another aspect of "holiness" is discovered in the "MUSTARD SEED". Matthew 13 31-32 One who walks with God as *Theophylact* put it "should be *small* in appearance-no spectacle of virtue but fervent zealous and energetic and armed to reprove". The growth of holiness is on account of "fire in the heart" as there is *vitality* in the mustard seed. Disciples as at Pentecost were purged from double heartedness. The fire of divine love is vital to consuming pride, self-righteousness, ambition, temper and lust. The world is sick of those who seek their own glory. The mustard seed is *pungent* and has been esteemed to provide a remedy against poisons and venom but only after it is *bruised*. So because He was bruised we are healed. We too like Stephen must learn to pass over the faults of others.

(c) HOLINESS AS A BAPTISM OF FIRE THAT HALTS CARNALITY (THE PERFECTION OF FORGIVENESS UNTIL 70x7 HIDES ALL SIN)

The parable of the UNMERCIFUL SERVANT is taken to teach that fallen man needs more than forgiveness or pardon-he needs *holiness* if he is to act as Christ acted. The call is for that work of grace that *burns out* carnality and *burns in* divine love. That work is the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. The emphasis that *JDD* lays depends on seeing *forgiveness as conditional*-the condition being that the forgiven one abides in faith *that works by love and obedience which is love in action*-in the state of grace.(John15.6). Apostasy represents the end of obedience denial of Christ and the demise of the state of grace. Because the gifts of God are without repentance those

called(or elect) and redeemed who seek and find the Lord's pardon will not become apostate but will be glorified(Romans 8.30) and this is altogether because of the intimate workings of the Holy Spirit the mystery of which God knew from the first. A comparison is given of a man who is drawn from the raging sea but again casts him into the raging waters. Jesus spoke of a man out of whom 7 demons were cast who consorted with the same and more whose latter state was worse than the first. Thus apostasy and election are held in tension and key to understanding the issue is Jesus word in John 14.17. The confession of the mouth and the display of mighty deeds and even the *accompaniment* of the Holy Spirit with a person calling Jesus Lord is not a copper-bottomed guarantee of regeneration(Matthew 7.21-23 with Hebrew 6.4-6).

(d) HOLINESS AS ACTIVE SERVICE (THE PERFECTION OF LOVE NEVER FAILS TO VALUE OR AND UTTERLY CHANGE ALL LIVES WHO ARE WILLING –AND THE PERFECTION OF HUMILITY & SERVANTHOOD OVERCOMES FUTILITY)

From the parable of **LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD** *JDD* rounds like the apostle Paul in 2Thessalonians 3.11 on those who are idle. He urges that the Lord has no time for “sluggards” in his Kingdom and in tune with the strictest ethic of work tells us “that everything which we cannot show to be in some shape directly or indirectly connected with the spread maintenance or progress of the kingdom of God in our souls or the community at large is pronounced *idleness*. Drawing on the concept of *degrees of glory* and *crowns of reward* referred to in the NT, *JDD* emphasises that devotedness to service results in a better resurrection. We do well to encourage our hearts in holiness whilst serving Him who both gives a denarius to every worker and yet reserves diadems for those committed to His call to serve.

(e) HOLINESS AS JOY(THE PERFECTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS MAKES MEET FOR THE PRESDENCE OF GOD-PURITY OF HEART)

The parable of **THE MAN WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT** Matthew 22.11-14 takes us beyond concerns and responsibilities for possessions and even family to seeking first the kingdom of God. The “wedding garment” as *Matthew Henry* avers is both *imputed* and *imparted righteousness* received as a gift and grant”. *Adam Clark* urges upon us that because “*without holiness no man shall see the Lord*” the garment is “holiness of heart and life” *JDD* explains the garment by referring to Revelation 19.8 where “the fine linen spoken of it not *imputed righteousness* but the *righteousness that the Spirit of Christ has wrought in believers*. A *Puritan* once said “We are weaving now what we shall wear hereafter”. This apparel is the irrepressible demonstration of inward happiness joy and purity for it is a “wedding garment.”

(f) HOLINESS AS HUMILITY & PRAYERFULNESS (THE PERFECTION OF ABIDING YIELDS ABUNDANCE OF FRUIT IN GLORIOUS AND LIVING SEALED WITH SOULS FOR OUR HIRE)

The parable of **THE VINE AND BRANCHES** in John 15 1-16 teaches our *engrafting* into Christ for salvation but also our *cleansing* for better fruitfulness. What shall we say of this “purging”? Is it a second work of grace? Jesus says “You are clean through the word I have spoken to you”. In John 13.30 Judas went out. Jesus taught that there is a “pruning of dead works” and “abiding” and growing in God resulting in love and joy and greater fruit and of “the coming of the Advocate” and of “greater works” (14.16 & 26) but he taught by the lesson of the towel how humility and loving service might be preserved. This unforgettable lesson showed how a church and a Christian could stay clean by the application of the word of Christ and mutual humility.

(g) HOLINESS AS THE RECOGNISABLE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (THE PERFECTION OF THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM FILLING THE LAMP OF LIFE ANTICIPATES THE BRIDEGROOM)

In the parable of **THE WISE & FOOLISH VIRGINS** Matthew 25 1-13 when the foolish cry out against their exclusion from the marriage the Lord says “I so not know you from sight”(OIDA). The point being made is that our identity is not alone in the garment of righteousness but in the oil in our vessel as the hymn says “They that have my Spirit these says He are mine”. The reason for lack of oil is not just “slumbering” but it accounts in a measure for this group *not being active* and *paying the price* for oil. The virgins had a relationship to the bride but no similar relationship to the bridegroom.

(h) HOLINESS IS CONTINUOUS CLEANSING AND HOLY SPIRIT PURGING (THE PERFECT LIFE IS IN THE SEED) WHICH AUTOMATIC BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER SPRINGS UP TO FULLNESS

In the parable of **THE SEED THE BLADE AND FULL CORN** Mark 4 26-29 *JDD* argues that the “seed” is the word of new birth, the blade is “growth” and the “full corn” is “maturity”. This purity is not “grown”. Matthew Henry comments on Matthew 5.8 “Blessed are the pure in heart” saying “here holiness and happiness are put together. True Christianity lies in the heart, in the purity of the heart: in its washing from wickedness. (Jer.4.14) The heart must be pure in opposition to pollution & defilement as wine is unmixed as water un-muddied. The heart must be kept pure from fleshly lusts, all unchaste thoughts and desires; and from worldly lusts, from covetousness which is called filthy lucre, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, from that which comes out of the heart and defiles”. *JDD* is adamant that scripture does not teach gradual advance of the Christian by consecutive steps or acts of obedience until by removing stain after stain impurity is gone. Gradualism is a natural not a supernatural procedure. God works by instantaneous provision to faith. *Adam Clark's theology (P.208) argues that neither pardon nor purification are seriatim or gradation provisions* but given by the sealing and baptising work of the Holy Spirit. Growth does not change nature but increases quantity or quality.

(i) HOLINESS AS THE MAJOR BENEFIT OF OUR SALVATION (THE PERFECT PEARL MAKES IT AND SPLENDIDLY THROUGH SUFFERING AND THE GOLDEN LIFE OF HOLINESS RETAINS ITS BEAUTY THOUGH BURIED IN SOME CORNER OF MISSION)

When in Psalm 103.2 ff David spoke of divine benefits he spoke of redemption and healing and the crown of love and compassion and satisfying our desires or prayers. There are thus three benefits that may be sought and *the crown of love and compassion* is the one clearly associated with holiness. *JDD* takes **THE PARABLE OF THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD** as a picture of the way of salvation and the **PARABLE OF THE MERCHANTMAN** (cf. Matthew 13 44-45) seeking good pearls as a picture of the believer seeking and entering the way of holiness. To return to David we read that he prayed “Create within me a clean heart, O God”(Psalm 51.10). This was no “*naughty boy's runaway knock*” (*JDD*) on God's door-this was desired by David as much and more as wisdom was sought by Solomon. We do well to recognise that after his gross sin with Bathsheba and the visit of Nathan that the man David was deeply desirous of a creative work of purification in his life. Whatever devotion and holiness is reflected in that body of divinity we call the psalms is resultant upon that prayer! David calls it the “crowning benefit”. This benefit of “purity” is no mirage and is emphasised by all the apostles (Acts 15.9, 1 Timothy 3.9 “purity of deacons”, 1 Timothy 5.22 and 2 Timothy 2.21, James 4.8, 1 John 3.3, 2 Peter 3.1).

(6) ANALYSIS & WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

THERE IS NO DOUBTING THE BIBLICAL CALL TO HOLINESS & GOD’S CALL TO AND PROVISION FOR HOLINESS IN OUR LIVES.

God has said “Be ye holy because I am holy”(Lev.20.7). Paul subscribes that position saying “This is the will of God even you sanctification”(1Thess.4.3). Scripture says “follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord”(Hebrews 12.14 Barnabas?). Paul instructed the Corinthians to “perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord” (2 Cor.7.1). Paul further desired the young church at Thessalonica to be “full to overflowing of mutual love so that their supported hearts would be unblemished without blame and disgrace in the circle of holiness - in the immediate presence of God the Father -in the parousia of our Lord with His holy angels.”(1Thess.3.13). Zechariah says He raised up the horn of salvation for us...to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days”. Writing to the Ephesians Paul insisted on holiness...“I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord ...you must not live as the Gentiles...You were taught to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”, This way of life centres in walking in the way of love and sacrificial living. Paul finishes by stressing to the Ephesians that this way of life is one “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5.18).

NO COUNTERPOINT BETWEEN CRISIS AND CURRICULUM

Historically justification has been described as “an act of God’s grace” and sanctification as “a work of God’s grace. Because so called “crisis” with a presumed plateau of perfection ensuing has been pitted against a dogged struggle towards heaven with the world, the flesh and the devil the empirical experience of the apparent mass of Christendom has become a prevailing dogma of dashed hopes and despair for holy living in the turmoil of living in the fast track of a materialist and secular culture. The hope of holiness has come to be stated thus “We are trying our best and have to confess to abject failure but what can you expect for we are all sinners”. The dream has been shattered; in too many lives a lively start has ground to an untimely halt. I don’t imagine for one moment that any of the apostles would have been content that this is what is on offer or that this is what the curriculum is about.

Is there any alternative to the Scylla of crisis and the Charybdis of a non-such concept of curriculum and its purpose? I believe there is a very substantial and scriptural alternative and one which can be cogently supported from the bible.

Lets then look at “the work of sanctification”. It is first of all the work of God’s Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not go to work *like a navvy*. He is a glorious person and His first action was to brood over the waters in a most dynamic manner so that life emerged immediately and light and dark were separated. ***In other words the Holy Spirit is energetic and dynamic.***

I maintain that the giving of the life of the Spirit and Baptism by the Holy Spirit are both dynamic though one is an act which describes our beginning in Christ and the other is the response of the Risen Christ to the need of the hungry believer (Matthew 45.6) who seeks power to win over sin and live unheeding of the siren voice of covetousness laden with desires emanating from the world and the flesh and deceptions of the devil.

Very well, but can we thereafter introduce *a curriculum* after what is admittedly better described as *a dynamic departure* from the will of the flesh and the law of the flesh-a “new mind” and the powerful exertion of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? This experience of the Holy Ghost has been well described as *the expulsive power of a new affection*-it is God’s Spirit at work to utilise all the yielded members and fill the temple and hallow the affections and engrave the glorious new pattern of the mind of Christ on the soul.

So what of *the 300 or more directions* of the apostle Paul largely found in the practical sections of his letters? Are they redundant? No, not at all. If so much power and love and blessing comes with initialising the work of holiness is there anything left to do? Yes, indeed there is a continuing work in the holy life –*a progress in holiness* –not a quest for unattainable holiness. Paul is faithful to show us how we can keep our concentration and zeal for holiness active and robust and this also we must do. *Scriptural holiness* is nothing less than that–the Holy Ghost dynamically settled in the spirit and joyfully lifting the whole man–constantly in converse with the Lord and under the curriculum of the Holy Spirit– to higher ground. *The law of the mind* and a the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus produces wholeness–liberty from the progress of the law of sin and death and daily growth in Christ-likeness. As in His earthly life Christ is still by His gracious Spirit in the business of making men and women whole.

(i) Paul writes to the young *Thessalonian* church “Brothers and sister we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus Christ to do this more and more. Paul then gives the church a check-list for holiness or love in action (a curriculum for progress in holiness) and then adds *God did not call us to be impure but in holiness*. Therefore anyone who rejects this instruction does not set aside a human being but God –the very God who gives you His Holy Spirit. *The principle of Purity is taught to this young church*.

Peter mirrors Paul and writes “As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance but just as He who called you is holy so be holy in all you do for it is written “Be holy as I am holy”. ..”Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other love one another deeply from the heart.”1Peter1 14ff and 22ff. Peter also has *a curriculum* and in his second letter he writes “Make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge, self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness mutual affection, and to mutual affection love. If you possess these qualities in increasing measure you will not be ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Peter shows that such living confirms calling and election and means the believers will not stumble but have a rich entrance to the eternal kingdom.” (2 Peter 1. 5-11)

(ii) Paul tells *Timothy* that *holiness with contentment* or sufficient supplies is a great gain or great means of gain. From the vantage point of holiness worldly wealth and desire for money is grief. The young mentored leader is encouraged to pursue what he has already gained, namely righteousness and holiness because as holiness grows faith love patience and gentleness grow too. Besides the battle of “the faith” with bold confession of Christ must go on by perseverance and perfection through suffering that is waiting in the wings. This is not an introvert battle but a progress in holiness. *Paul like CT Studd taught that the Christian walk is not a bed of roses and reminded Timothy that with persecution comes suffering and in the endurance thereof there is that which makes the sacrifice of life to God complete*.

(iii) Again to *Titus* charged with instructing believers from among the Cretans who sustained the most sordid reputation in the Roman world was reminded that “Christ gave himself for two reasons (1) to redeem us from all wickedness and (2) *to purify for himself a people* that are his very own eager to do what is good.

(iv) Paul encourages *the Church in Colossae* saying “In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and *in Christ you have been brought to fullness*. ..Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ. Paul speaks of their “circumcision” (cf. Romans 2.29 with Deut.30.6) & Jeremiah 4.4) and their faith in the working of God which raised

up Christ (Romans 8.11) and so of the dynamic of holiness. So in concert with the holiness Moses sets forth Paul instructs “Over all these virtues put on *love*, which binds them all together in a perfect unity.”(Col3.14). *Paul teaches the Colossians the vital truth of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.*

(v) Writing to *the Corinthians* amongst whom we read of some glaring examples of carnality the apostle said “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”(1Cor10.12). In the second epistle Paul assured his friends at Corinth “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but dynamic through God to the destruction of pivotal strongholds”. Thus “every thought is taken prisoner to the obedience of Christ”.

It is when Paul develops his theme about the glory of the New Testament that he says “*Now* the Spirit is Lord or God *now* where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. *Now* we all with unveiled face are reflecting the glory of the Lord- the very same likeness - as we are being transformed from glory to glory *altogether or however much* (*καθαπερ*) by the Spirit of the Lord. As in Romans this transformation is made possible by *the renewing of the mind.*

(vi) *The Galatian church* struggled with the “circumcision party” who like Mormons that believe baptism is an act necessary to salvation believed that physical circumcision had that sort of spiritual importance. He put the truth on this matter like this “For in Christ Jesus what has strength-neither circumcision nor un-circumcision but faith that energises within through love” 5.6.

The apostle sums up “Now I say, *walk in step with the Spirit* as a teacher and you will definitely not end up with the desire of the flesh. For the flesh yearns and sets its heart contrary to the Spirit but the Spirit yearns clean contrary to the flesh. These are arrayed contrary to one another as foes so that you are not to do whatever you desire. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law. Paul lists 16 works of the flesh which constitute signs of where the carnal control is unbroken. He then follows up by setting forth the fruit of the Spirit and says “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live *by the Spirit let us keep in battle order* with the Spirit (No empty glory, no defiance of one another in private contests, no envy or jealousy).” *Paul has been addressing circumcision or purity of heart whilst he dismisses cutting the flesh as on a par with dog bites in terms of holiness.*

(vii) Writing to *Ephesians* Paul covers four of his principles relevant to this subject. He says “We are Gods inspired work, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we should model the walk in them and practice them”(2.10). He describes God’s household as “a holy temple”(2.21).

(a) The apostle in his first prayer prays (1) that they may know the Lord better through the work of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and so experience “his surpassing power like that of *the mightiest catapult for destroying strongholds* (*υπερβαλλη* 1.19) which is the energising within of His total or sovereign might and amount of his strength seen in the risen Christ.”1.19). In his second he prays “That you may have become strong as lions(*κραταιος*) through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ would settle down not as a neighbour but as one who is establishing a colony of heaven among you.” The *indwelling Spirit* would so inwardly strengthen that the Ephesians “would prevail with all saints to seize the entire territory of the Love of Christ and know *the mightiest engine ever known* (*υπερβαλλη*—the Roman catapult is the image employed) to overhaul evil and gain victory—the love of Christ and that you might be filled with all the fullness of God”.

(b) The apostle in 4.20-24 sets out *the model of the New Man* that doubtless Paul taught since those early days when his pupils gained the name “little Christ’s” in Antioch. Paul sets the true

model against the futility darkness separation from God and sensuality that is the world around. He says “You have not so heard and obeyed or been taught in His circle according to how the truth is in Jesus. You have put off as far as concerns your former way of life, the old man, who was disordered and debauched in line with lusts that deceive to be renewed in the spirit of your mind and clothed with the new man created after God’s image in righteousness and the holiness of truth and openness.”(4.21-24).

(c) The apostle points clearly to the will of the Lord in 5. 17-20. He says “Understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead ***be constantly filled in the circle of the Spirit***, speaking or singing psalms (from the writings) hymns (from the prophets) and odes (from the law)-[listening to God from the entire scope of scripture and turning it into praise], singing and playing to accompaniment in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ .” The principle of walking in Gods will with worship and ***thorough attention to God’s word*** is set out plainly.

(d) The apostle finally addresses ***the principle of victory*** through being clothed in the whole armour of God and so standing when the enemy has left the field (Eph.6.10-19)

Paul was aware of the “systematic wiles” or the devil. This battle is one such as Christ faced in the mount of temptation. It is one where our Lord modelled victory. For Paul such victory resides in having the belt of truth in place and the breastplate of righteousness on, being a zealous gospel ambassador carrying the message of victory, in being faithful and believing, full of the assurance of salvation and being ever in possession of the sword of the Spirit and securing the whole spiritual life with all types of ***prayer converse with God*** and especially prayer for the advance of the gospel.

(viii) The final piece of the jig-saw in the Pauline octave of lessons on holiness is on the “***Mind of Christ***” or the new “law of the mind” to which he also refers in Romans. This is his manner of setting forth holiness for the blessing of ***the church at Philippi*** that he loved so greatly.

Paul urges “Let his disposition of heart will though purpose courage nobility and understanding be in you that was in Christ Jesus”. (*The New NIV uses the felicitous term “mindset”*). Christ really and naturally existed from the first(υπαρχω) in the beautiful ***outward form***(μορφος reflecting the inner ειδος) of God and did not esteem it to be theft to be ***equal to God*** but he emptied Himself taking the ***outward form*** (μορφος) ***of a servant*** become like men and having found himself in the character (σημα)or fashion and constitution of man, he humbled Himself(yet further) becoming obedient to death, to the measure and degree of death-indeed death by crucifixion. Wherefore God has hyper exalted Him and cheered gratified and welcomed Him with a name above any other, that in the circle of the name of Jesus (Yeshua-God saves) every knee should bow in change of purpose in heaven earth and under the earth and every tongue confess in fullness that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”. Thus the willingness to change the beautiful form He most anciently had for the precise constitution of a male human being and discover the difference was awesome but to go further and move to the extremity of death after living humbly was something very special. It declare the nobility and courage and steadfast purpose of our Lord and hence this wonderful name of Jesus with which He was greeted when he came to earth and with which he was greeted in heaven (“You are God who saves man”). This entire noble act calls forth a response in those who are saved and encourages us to humble obedience to Him who so loved us.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

The detail of how to cross over from defeat to victory is found in Romans 6-8

- (1) Reckon yourselves dead to sin 6.11)
- (2) Offer yourselves to God as those with lives to live in thankfulness and offer ***every part to him as an instrument of righteousness***-sin shall not be your master
- (3) Offer yourselves as slaves of righteousness for holiness(or holy living)

- (4) Recognise *the* besetting sin- cf. *Paul* & The rich Fool (Romans 7.7 & Luke 12.16-21) “covetousness” which is ‘hunger for what a man has not’ and drawing our main ambition joy and satisfaction from it. Covetousness is at the head of mans depravity (Rom. 1.29) and classifies as “idolatry”(Col. 3,5) and alongside fornication (1 Cor. 5,9-11) cf. *David* (Psalm 19.13 who coveted Bathsheba). Some argue that the root of sin cannot be destroyed but Paul is well aware that his holy living put an end to covetousness which *is* the virtual root.
- (5) Recognise *the law of the Spirit which fills the obedient believer* sets God’s servants free.
- (6) Now the mind is set and focussed upon what the Spirit desires.
- (7) The *Holy Spirit intercedes* for us 8.26
- (8) We are to become *conformed to Christ in life* as His *called ones* who love our Lord as we are assuredly justified & shall as certainly be glorified. 8.29-30
- (9) We are to live as more than conquerors who cannot conquer their own passions or worldly avarice because He loved us 8.37. Ours is no Pyrrhic victory.

AN APPROACH TO AN EFFECTIVE MODERN DOCTRINE OF HOLINESS *THE IMPORTANCE OF PAUL’S TEACHING ON COVETOUSNESS*

One is hard put to it to deny that “covetousness” as recognised by the apostle as the thriving root of sin is possible to counter. Mighty renewal of the mind and desires after the Spirit’s work in us deal it a deadly blow.

PURITY OF HEART IS SACROSANCT

One cannot submit any case against “purity”. Even the philosopher *Kierkegaard* had deep respect for purity of heart. Jesus said “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God”. Bold he would be indeed who would say “None shall see God”. Purity is high on the Christian agenda and doubtless millions have sought God like David who said “Create in me a pure heart”. An undivided heart that actively pursues holiness of life in the Pauline manner and the puts first the things of the kingdom- a copy of the Lord’s was obtained by David of whom it was said “He is a man after my own heart”(1 Samuel 13.14). Was it intended that only one such copy would ever be? In answer to “How deep shall the cross go?” we dare to answer “to the motives of thought and action”. The word of God is well able to divide between joint and marrow and thought and intent and the Christian is bound under the guidance and enabling of the Holy Spirit to halt the incursion of sin and besetting sin at that point. Despite this the fugitive “tongue” as James tells us among our members is the Achilles heel of the holiest man. Our daily prayer with David should be “Keep thou the door of my lips”.

SERIATIM PROGRESS THE LAW OF THE MIND AND PERFECTING OF HOLINESS

Is *Adam Clark* right that holiness was not intended to be a step by step process of getting better? If Clark is wrong it seems by the general appreciation of contemporary Christianity on a par with snakes and ladders and believers report many big snakes from the high percentage moral failure rates in the Christian ministry to the serialised struggles to which face book gives open testimony. The idea of living in victory is trumped in theological debate by the idea of life as a continuous spiritual battle and abject failure. Theologians would be better to view *the armour of the Spirit* as a way of maintaining victory and support of the saint and not as an illustration of failure. Theology would be in step with biblical teaching in stressing that the agonistic contest of faith is descriptive of progress and taking one’s stand against the world the flesh and the devil in the array of the Holy Spirit. Paul is convinced he is “more than a conqueror” so he does not suppose the armour he speaks of is vulnerable. What he asks is that we wear it because Satan is present and each piece of armour is vital to parrying his methods. *JDD’S* handling of the “merchantman” parable might seem esoteric but there is no fault in any wise believer trading all

he has to pursue holiness and put first the kingdom of God. Such a Christian I would assert is in the right business and pre-disposing his future to seriously improved results. If I might revert for a moment to the *“idea of pursuit of holiness”*(διωκω) it is not to be conceived of as “chasing a cheetah” but as “persecuting something world changing. The word for “pursue” that Paul uses is the word *“persecute*. He who himself spent time persecuting Christians when he experienced their life and the “expulsive power” of this new affection urged every Christian to concentrated fully on holiness.

THE HOLY GHOST AS LEADER AND ADVOCATE

Does the fullness of the Holy Spirit materially affect holiness. The constant daily impact of the Holy Spirit in the yielded vessel of your life and mine will make a most significant impact on the efficacy of our praying, the effectiveness of our service and the joy and happiness of our lives. We are very carefully advised *not to “grieve”* the Holy Spirit (Eph.4.30) and *not to “quench”* the Holy Spirit (1Thess.5.19) but rather “to be filled”(Eph.4.18). No man can gainsay God on the mighty effects sought from such pervasive work of God’s Spirit in the heart and life of man. Like Christ who prevailed when tempted we are to walk in step with the Spirit.

JOY HUMILITY AND A FORGIVING SPIRIT

Few will seriously contest that holiness by definition should be “joy in the Holy Ghost” and that holy men and women like the prophets are the more mightily useful in the hands of a compassionate God and His service. Holiness if it means anything means the willingness to live humbly and sacrificially and so it ought to lead to fitting and smoothening of relationships through the willingness to forgive and the God given ability to forgive others.

The most acute problems for the doctrine of holiness occur when *the Holy Spirit’s purging work* is set alongside *fallibility* as cast in Calvinistic thinking. It seems the immovable object has suffered intrusion from the irresistible force. My confidence is in the latter. The Calvinist should be encouraged to believe that *a sovereign God* who calls and justifies and glorifies *can and will sanctify* and much more than that-He would have developed the means to effect the holiness He demands. The catechism definition of sanctification is a bit-by-bit process called a “work of the Spirit”. It is said we are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to God. The metaphor is not the best for this *prolonged death* is hardly what God intends for His saints nor what we would want for anyone. Holiness is indeed a “work of the Holy Spirit” but spasmodic or “patch-on-the-trousers” holiness is not I think what scripture is driving at, at all. Romans 6-8 does not leave us as *“servants of sin”* or as *“miserable men”* but takes us on to victory in Jesus and God provides the means for the maintenance of *holiness without which no man shall see the Lord*. Let us then pursue holiness with all zeal eschewing the lust of the world of the flesh and the pride of life. (2 Peter 2.10 & 1 John 2.16). The converse is absence of the love of the Father which on no account is tolerable for the children of God (1Jn.1.15).

HUNGRY FOR JESUS TYPE HOLINESS

I cannot resist at this stage in this study reflecting on the fourth chapter of the first section of *David Wilkerson’s* book “Hungry for more of Jesus”. *DW* not only has the answer to understanding the concept of the “perfect heart” and “purity of heart” and this little segment will do good service in taking those sceptical of the holy life to appreciate both its necessity and its practicality. *DW* was a hands on frontiersman in New York tackling the drugs problem of that great city head on. His type of holiness is that of the master.

What does he say? He returns us to the biblical understanding of what God meant when He said to Moses “Be holy for I am holy”-when He said to Abraham “Walk before me and be thou perfect”, when he said through John He that is born of God sinneth not”. *DW* has three vital

principles and they are set out in a workmanlike and convincing manner in his book that every Christian should read.

- (1) **A perfect heart is searchable.** David says “Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me” (cf. Psalm 139 23-4 with 1 Chronicles 28.9, Jeremiah 17.9 Psalm 64.6, Isaiah 29.15.) DW refers to the Old Testament tent-tabernacle kind of walk with God which demanded that on each approach to God the priest used *the laver* (*continuance in the word*). He plays fun at the “Just go to the altar-trust in the blood and go boldly to the holy of Holies. Your daddy loves you-He is waiting. He sees Jesus in you-You don’t need to search your heart. Your sin is under the blood.” It’s a quick ticket that is sought. Based on 1 John 1.7. DW reminds us that “we must walk in the light” and that John 15.3. The perfect heart seeks for more than security or cleansing –it seeks communion and His face and His presence. It must be “covering, cleansing, commitment, communion” The Lord’s heart searchings are not vindictive but redemptive. His purpose is not to catch us in sin but prepare us to stand in His presence. (Psalm 34.3-5)
- (2) **A perfect heart is trusting.** (Psalm 11.1, 22 4-5, 25.2. The Hebrew root of trust suggests “to fling oneself off a precipice” like a child jumping from the rafters into its father’s arms.-it is active belief. *The Lord is not the captain of some cosmic fire-and-rescue company. It is not as if Satan set the house on fire and we stand yelling “Lord, help! Save me!” and then along came the angels with a big net and God said “Jump” and we say “Thank you Lord!”*. This understanding makes God reactive not active. Then comes a purple passage on holiness “ You are not the devil’s punch-bag. He does not have free access to harass or touch you. What kind of father would I be if I allowed a drug-pusher, bully or child molester to have free access to any of my children? Yet we go round saying “The devil did this to me”. I ask “Where do you think our Father is? Sleeping”. Doesn’t He care about us? Can we really think that He allows us to remain as open prey to rapists and killers? Never! Remember that Satan could not touch Job without God’s permission. God had to lower the wall around Job for Satan to get to him. God may allow the devil access –our own sin or *disobedience may lead us to the devil’s doorstep* when God has been trying to warn us. A trusting heart says “All my steps are ordered by the Lord. I am the apple of His eye. He is Lord over every event that *touches* me. I might add that scripture says “He will not allow you to be tested above that you are able but will with the temptation provide a way of escape”(1 Cor. 10.13)
- (3) **A perfect heart is broken.** As David said “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite (crushed) spirit” Psalm 34.18 cf. also Psalm 51.17. True brokenness releases in the heart the greatest power God can entrust to mankind...power that restores ruins-a power that brings a special kind of glory and honour to our Lord. DW, who sees himself in the shadow of Nehemiah in the city he loves, quotes the case of Nehemiah who “sat down and wept and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven”(Neh. 1.4) Yet his weeping and confessing were only the beginning of his breaking. DW cites the fullest meaning of the Hebrew *SHABAR* as “breaking” in two ways-in grief and in hope. (*From the selfsame meaning here are indeed applications of the same meaning to the “breaking of thirst” and to the “breaking of waters” in birthing besides “breaking down altars walls or kingdoms” and “crushing corn”*) He

[*Nehemiah*] could have stayed in the palace weeping mourning and fasting yet he would still not have had a broken heart". His heart was not fully broken till he came to Jerusalem. First it broke with anguish and ruin and second with hope for rebuilding (bursting with hope). The second important element to this brokenness is this hope. The truly broken heart has heard from God: "I will heal, restore and build. Get rid of the rubbish, and get to work rebuilding the breaches!" This was *DW'S* experience as he first walked through Times Squared and then went back to his home In Texas where God said "Go and do something about all this ruin. I was moved by God to come back and build a church." DW concludes "If our hearts are open and being searched by God; if we are trusting that He is sovereignly at work; if we are broken in grief and in hope, then we possess the most valuable tool for the work of the Kingdom of God: a perfect heart."

WESTGATE COMMENTARY IN LOCO

The sacrifices of God are a spirit that has broken itself, a heart broken of itself and a heart broken and crushed like that which goes to dust as pottery or like a eunuch's organs (*Hebrew akd DAK'*). O God you will not despise. *The eunuch would be despised in Israel but the man who is committed to ever after carefulness God will not despise. This is the hope of the dissolute; the prostitute; the homosexual and the child abuser.* In your good pleasure make Zion **successful**. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. *David hopes beyond his sin for the growth in prosperity and advance of Jerusalem and Israel.*

THE BASIS AND MEANS OF A HOLY LIFE

It is not the arriving but the journey that affords greatest joy in many things. This is true of a sightseeing trip whether on a country coach or river trip or multi destination cruise. It is also true of holiness in the sense that as one goes one enjoys all the benefits of holiness but not in the sense that one can be happy with a jaunty and uncomfortable sanctification that does not deserve the name where besetting sin dogs one's path unconquered and anger rules un-assuaged. How can God or man be happy where a sharp tongue abides ungoverned and self seeking covert or otherwise has little regard for "others" and stalls at that inferior sort of forgiving without forgetting whilst converse with God is hardly traceable on the graph of relationships?

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Many a disturbed Christian soul must crave for a fresh start. I remember a dear old gentleman who failed to receive the new birth because he idolised social substitutes and yet he would regale me with these lines

O for a place of beginning again
A place where life's heartaches
Can be dropped like a hat at the door
And ne'er remembered any more.

Many a saint of God who has been taught for years about Christian armour and believes with confidence in the forgiveness of God is nevertheless deeply dissatisfied with the personal experience of holiness and indeed with the secular model of Christian life indulged and commended by gospel preaching. The remedy lies in referring the matter to God whose Holy Spirit dovetails to the space afforded Him in consecration and can both plumb and purge the heart.

VICTORY NOT DEFEAT IS GUARANTEED

“We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!”

My mother and her aunt were converted on the same evening in a Faith Mission meeting in a small hall in Brackney, one of 50 town-lands that lie to the seaward of the Mourne Mountain range. (Northern Ireland). In continued witness since the second World War pilgrims of this mission have witnessed to victorious Christian living. As a young Christian I well remember *Duncan Campbell* and such preachers at the 3 Church centre massively attended Bangor Convention encourage us to seek that purifying baptism of fire that the Holy Ghost freely offers to those who willingly would lay all on the altar. I know it is no different from what Paul taught the Romans in Chapter 12. I know it is of one sort with the power made available at Pentecost that put new zeal into cringing disciples and made glorious witnesses with new tongues out of sullen souls. I know it makes the difference between beatitude and attitude. I know that the Holy Spirit must receive crown rights to the heart house else Christ is not Lord at all.

Thy Holy Spirit Lord alone
Can turn our hearts from sin;
His power alone can sanctify
And keep us pure within.
O Spirit of ***faith and love,***
Come in our midst we pray,
And purify each waiting heart;
baptise us with power today.

Thy Holy Spirit, Lord, alone
Can deeper love inspire;
His power alone within our souls
Can light the sacred fire.

Thy Holy Spirit, Lord, can bring
The gifts we seek in prayer;
His voice can words of comfort speak
And still each wave of care.

Thy Holy Spirit, Lord, can give
The grace we need this hour;
And while we wait, O Spirit, come
In sanctifying power.

O Spirit of love, descend,
Come in our midst we pray
And like a rushing mighty wind
Sweep over our souls today.

A “CAN DO” WINS EVERY TIME AGAINST A “NO CAN DO” SPIRIT

What I would like you to observe about this hymn by *Henrietta Blair* is that it simply oozes confidence in the possibility of holiness. It is a hymn of the doable—a song of victory. God is sovereign in holiness as in salvation and as King (the German for King is Keonig and it means means “the One who can”) He can do immeasurably above all that we ask or imagine according to the power that is at work within us” filling us with the fullness of God’s desiring and gaining experience of the love of Christ. These riches are yours and mine for the asking—in fact Paul is praying that the church in Ephesus where wealth was concentrated at the temple of Diana would claim this superior moral and spiritual wealth that Jesus offers. (Ephesians 3 14-21)

THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS

I now commend to you the practical steps indicated in Romans 6-8 & 12 by the apostle Paul in seeking to bring his Roman audience up to speed in Christian living or sanctification.

(1) Brothers and sisters, count yourselves dead to sin-do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. **Offer your every part** to God as an instrument of righteousness.

(2) Brothers and sister, **offer yourselves as slaves** to righteousness **leading to holiness**.

(3) Brothers and sisters we have died to the law and are not under the rule of the flesh and its **desires**

(4) Brothers and sisters, we are not to be governed by the engrossing but, praise God, not irremediable **covetous heart** of yesterday but are to come under the loving reign of the **“law of the mind”** which obeys, loves, gives and forgives.

(5) Brothers and sisters, those who live according to the flesh have their kinds set on what the flesh desires, but those who live in accordance with the Spirit **have their minds set on what the Spirit desires**.

(6) Brothers and sisters, whom God foreknew he predestined to be conformed to **the image of His Son(The model of Christ-as a Christian)**. *The doctrine of sovereignty and Lordship is aimed at a holy people zealous of good works.*

(7) Brothers and sisters I urge you through mercy to **offer your bodies** (on the altar) as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God-this is true and logical worship at full stretch. It is accompanied by the transformation that **accompanies the “renewed mind”** that operates out of the obedience of faith by love. Such as take this highway of holiness the apostle assures us may join the muster of men and women through the ages who were filled with the Holy Spirit and made trial to their full satisfaction and joy of the good pleasing and perfect will of the One who sanctifies.

Every Jew knew the claim of God upon them “Be ye holy as I am holy” but only in walking with God and by the work of the Holy Spirit could the cycle of sin and trespass be broken and victory be achieved.

DYNAMIC HOLINESS

Dr Creflo Dollar in his two stage treatment of the subject of holiness teaches that the old nature governs the spirit and controls the *soul and body* which taken together constitute *the flesh*. The New birth introduces the Holy Spirit into the life of the Christian and He resides with my spirit and seeks control over the flesh-namely the ideas and desire that dominate my life-in order to introduce the mind of Christ and new desires after holiness. However, the flesh objects and warfare ensues. The second aspect of Dollar’s treatment brings the defeat of the flesh by the law of the mind through the power and fullness of the holy Spirit. This parallels “the dynamic holiness” which is taught in this doctrinal file . Dynamic holiness is compatible with a curriculum of qualitative growth but not **with the default position of an indeterminate warfare or an unsuccessful lifetime pursuit**. By its very nature the basic definition of dynamic (δυναμις) in Christ and in us is Power to overcome any enemy. Christ can raise resources higher than any weaponry Satan can muster.

DAVID WILKERSON

Let me return to the writing of a Christian who has immersed himself in the need of the culture around him and maintained the spiritual glow and godly intimacy with his Lord- and in conclusion quote from *David Wilkerson’s* “Hungry for more of Jesus”. Wilkerson writes against the background of reading *J.B. Stoney’s* 12 volumes on Intimacy with Christ. His treatment of holiness pivots on the life of Enoch who walked with God for 365 years. Enoch had the testimony that “He pleased God” (Hebrews11.5).

DW urges us to “**look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**” (Hebrews 12.2) He goes on “Show me a people who walk closely with him and I’ll show you people who don’t need much teaching and preaching about faith.” *DW* stresses three points under Enoch’s awareness that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”. (1) “The first reward is God’s control. A person who neglects the Lord soon spins out of control into the sphere of Satan’s influence. If only we would fall in love with Jesus and walk and talk with him”. (2) “The second reward is having pure light. When we walk with the Lord we are rewarded with direction, light, revelation”. (3) “The third reward is protection from all our enemies” ***No weapon formed against you shall prosper*** “Isaiah 54.17 He quotes the Hebrew “No weapon shall push you or run over you”. (The Hebrew indeed insists that no weapon shall overflow or go through us like a torrent or “succeed” or “finish well” ZALAH) Everything Satan tries to get us down just will not work”...The reward of those who diligently seek Him is the privilege of becoming more than conquerors”. One point to finish with on Enoch –Wilkinson reminds us that Enoch looked down all history to the very last days and ***no less than four times*** spelled out his revelation that the last age would be “ungodly”. Check it out for yourself (Jude 14-15). Does this not shriek at 21st century believers “What we need is Jesus. What we need is holy living. What we need is more looking unto Jesus who is coming soon”.

HOLINESS –A MINI SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

To sum up Christian teaching on holiness is like providing a mini course in theology. In writing this concise section I have found “The Anointed Life” by *Joseph Ellison* (founder of Bible Hall, Leicester & of a Bible Correspondence that reached four Midland counties) particularly apropos in forging the vital link between redemption and holiness. *JE’S* turn of phrase is felicitous. He writes “While there is great and sore need of a speedy increase in the number of God’s elect family let us not forget the need of a *better brand* of us.” In the section I have italicised some idioms I have adopted from his book

- (1) Adam was created very good and enjoyed a daily walk with God and a sort of *primitive holiness* we call innocence.
- (2) ***Hebrews*** which book speaks of the wide spectrum of perfections that arise out of the once for all offering of Christ tells us “**A body You have prepared for me**” and in the offering up of that divine body and soul Christ –the great lever of the cross of Jesus Christ became the atonement for our sins and not for ours only. Christ’s death and resurrection for us is dynamic and *forces incompetence on Satan*–John says tellingly “The evil one cannot touch or hold you” 1 John 5.19
- (3) Blood Redemption is written into scripture as a necessity in Leviticus 17.11 The Atonement was not paid to the villain (Ellison’s word is *the brigand*) of the peace (Satan) but to God by God in Christ for after the sin and failure of our federal head Adam *the terms of Redemption were determined by the Lord* and giver of life. Redemption necessarily includes the right of possession and entry and *no mortgage* was left to pay to the devil for property he illegally entered as a squatter.
- (4) The work of the Holy Spirit in us is designed to lay hold on what is Christ’s, cleanse and use it to the Lord’s glory is intentioned to “make us free from the law of sin and death” being the Spirit of Life in Christ. The “Oneness” of sanctifier and sanctified involves the Lord’s determination that *each shall be alike*. Hence Christ-likeness as Paul taught is of the essence of Christian holiness. As Christ took on Him the outline (σχημα) of a servant so *we will abandon self in recognition of our Master’s rights; we will not choose our work but seek the task at which He would have us labour; we will go without murmur at His call and rejoice in His reign by the Spirit*. If justification and some “lucky” escapes from the old life were all the old nature is immutable and there is nothing new. This ***a priori*** just cannot be the case. The quite detailed curriculum in

Paul's epistles makes no provision for failure or concession to standing still but reflects strenuous endeavour after presenting God's people without spot.

- (5) *Re-generation is not the renovation of our old nature* as the word might seem to imply but the gift of a new divine nature in an act of the Holy Spirit. This life Jesus describes as a gift and as one intended **in all fullness**. Paul writing to the Ephesians in chapter 2 speaks of God placing his Spirit in the inner man and of Christ dwelling in our hearts and then of the Ephesians and all believers for that matter being "filled with all the fullness of God".
- (6) *Holiness is the normal for the believer* (my own term is the "default" position) who is set apart and claimed by the act of redemption and the beginning of the work of sanctification. It is the default position. The Holy Spirit of Pentecost enabled victory and boldness in place of defeat and fear to the obedient and yielded men who awaited their enduement in the upper room.
- (7) John the divine is known amongst the Greeks as John the theologian for the teaching by which he moved Greece from the philosophy of men to the truth of God. He cites 5 feature s of the victorious life in his First Epistle (a)2.14 Young men you have conquered the evil one, **Hallelujah Victory in youth!** (b) 3.19 Whoever is born of God does not commit sin. Sin shows attachment to Satan and his worldly charms or evil seeds of desire but Holiness is of God. *If sin came in as superadded it can go out as undesired. Man plus the devil gets sin in whereas man plus Christ gets sin out. We may find it impossible to get blood out of our bodies and survive or get thoughts out of our mind* but sin can be dealt with by the blood and by the Holy Spirit of God and we will not only survive we will live to the full. We know that 1John2.1 exists to cover the exceptions of occasion of stumbling not to cover redress of the saint's continued moral and spiritual spiral of sinful living. **Hallelujah Victory unto Victory!** (c) 4.4 Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world-whether Satan or his Gnostic and other *agents*. **Hallelujah –Victory unto victory** (d) 5.4-5 The pull of the world-its wealth and culture and life-style cannot swamp us. We can move in and out among men and be unspotted from the world. **Hallelujah-since Christ my soul from sin set free this world has been a heaven to me.** (e) 5.19 The evil one cannot touch(*απτω* bind, wrestle to defeat, strike mortally, kindle our desire, enjoy playing with) us. **Amen, Lord, the devil is a defeated foe through Your blood and by the power of your sanctifying Spirit.**
- (8) The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire was deemed needful by Christ. Has He changed his mind? For the growth and empowerment of the body of Christ worldwide it is too widely acclaimed and experienced to be idiosyncratic. For the individual Christian in matters of high moment - *in matters of taste and feeling, emotion, attitude, pride and self* this anointing of God will empower and purify the believer whose life is yielded and committed wholly to God in obedience. Whatever one's churchmanship, theological acumen this chrism of God with its concomitant range of gifts as the Spirit divides to each may not be gainsaid.

Thy Holy Spirit Lord alone
Can turn our hearts from sin;
His power alone can sanctify
And keep us pure within.

O Spirit of faith and love
Come in our midst we pray
And purify each waiting heart;
baptise us with power today.

HOLINESS-APPROPRIATION AND CONTINUANCE

To put a recognisable asset into circulation by describing on what bases scriptural benefits may be accessed is a matter of some importance to believers.

What one can do is to map the terrain of holiness and put all the coordinates in place so that the treasure of the place can be found. So let me try to make plain how one who is seeking to walk with God under the anointing of His Spirit and the benefits that are the right of the children of God may find his way forward. Many duck such experience of God because it is costly and some demur because it does not seem to fit their theology or idea of how man is and some receive but find it hard to explain. Let us then proceed to help the enquirers who ask “Men and brethren what do we do?”—what shall we do with our defeated lives and unhappy lifestyle and failure in battling besetting sin and when soiled and defeatist thinking overwhelms our minds and we constantly mess up relationships. Is there any hope? The answer is “Yes” every time. Holiness is quite wrongly conceived as a long war with sundry defeats daily piling up. Sanctification or daily holy living is meant to be the default position not the “wretchedness” of the natural man to which Paul alludes in Romans 7. The where do I start? (i) **There is an Agent** (the Holy Ghost or indwelling guest) awaiting when you are truly ready to be holy (His seal is on your life and as Christ has now crown rights in your life as a Christian so He seeks the actual access to every key area of your life to turn it to new use.) This Lord the Spirit will introduce a dynamic to enable victorious living and that will become evident in several ways. (ii) **The Lord the Spirit will “shed abroad” a greater love** than you have know in your heart but..and this is a big but-you must stop saying “I will forgive but never forget!” There are no “never’s” in obedience to Christ. Your forgiveness by determination has to be and can be of the seventy times seven variety. (iii) **The Lord the Spirit will radically empower your prayers add effect to your intercessions and very often renew their language and fervency to.** Because prayer is deeply related to commitment in its basic form of *προσευχη* or vow our mission of evangelism away and beyond even our own holiness our response of gratitude to God for all his grace and providence and the burden of care for others is also involved and must be shared in prayer as Peter said “Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you.” Prayer first and last is communion with God and from it we take strength. (iv) **When you lay your whole life on the altar as you must-it is your reasonable worship**-the Lord the Spirit will begin the transformation of your **life in a renewing of your mind as you are prepared to allow every thought to be captive to Christ** (this is a vital and joyous process of saying “No” to what Satan and lust and the world sows at the unseen even semi subliminal level-and sins that once found easy access will be picked off like snipers one by one as “Christ is Lord” or “I am Christ’s” is your answer. *Augustine* used to say “It is not I-but Christ”. Here you will find what I call the “curriculum of holiness” a treat and the speed with which each Christian works on it is tied to your love for the Lord and His sovereignty and willingness to come under his Word to demonstrate the love his Spirit gave you. How can that love vary-simply by stalling the process of change on your part-it is like saying “cancel” (= “I “disobey or I disagree”) when you are installing a new programme on your computer. You can quickly run through all the categories or you can attempt to reinstall any number of times. So Christians differ).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERFECTION AND PURITY

Water can be pure to drink but have over 30 trace elements. **Gold can be pure** but be 25carat or 18 carat or 9 carat-for there are degrees of purity. The apostle John went a step further to the highest plateau of purity and said “**Light is pure**” and we are walking in light. He did not mean we as Christians continue to live shady lives. He meant we live pure and that is I think quite to the highest standard one could aspire to. That quality of Life John believed to be possible and I shall divert and in conclusion seek to **take you along the Pauline road to this default Christian beauty and joy of life.**

There is an additional matter of some importance to consider. I would call it “purity of heart” (Which is not to be confused with utter perfection). (v) **Purity of heart.** When you were born the

grey matter in you biological make up divided so that part moved upwards to form **your brain** and part moved lower to form an almost equally complex and vitally important part of you that we might call the **“bowels of compassion”** or the “heart” if you like. This semi-autonomous system of each of us is also involved in the change God makes in our nature. Because of this connection which as part of our make up is known to our creator it is important to speak of the Holy Spirit as governing **not just our understanding or reckoning and our conscience but our will as expressed in our emotions and feelings** and through the scriptures carrying His glorious work to the **purification of the heart**. *If you find this matter sits uneasily with the much preached “total corruption of man” just look again at what God can do and allow your faith to mount on wings to say with Mary “There is nothing impossible with God” despite my make up, temper, besetting sins, vile thoughts-He can alter me and I’m gonna let Him. But how? Let me take you along the Pauline road with pleasure. Paul said “If the law had not said “Thou shalt not covet I had not known sin”. He is saying that he could have said I have not stolen and despite his persecuting zeal he would have believed he had not killed-only punished blasphemers and he would have said he had not committed adultery and looked after his parents with all honour and worshipped God after the best practice of his religion-but he found that the last “sweeping command” called him to press his ideas about purification and holy living far deeper. The Lord showed him that this “covetous heart” that caused him to breach every command and intent after holiness could be cured. He could be given a love that would implement such obedience of faith and trust in God the Holy Ghost that the work of that love replaced bitterness with grace and love and he was renewed and found victory. No otherwise could he end up full of praise amid the experience of victory in Christ in Romans 8 and trailing the ship of Christianity behind him like some giant Gulliver in the pathway of purity and holiness saying “Follow me as I follow Christ”. All this is an additional aspect of the love of the cross and the power of the resurrection for Christ was raised up by the Spirit and so you shall be (Romans 8.11). Christ died to make you His own-a Son of God and the cross is going deeper in this continuing **work of grace** (not to be confused with **the act of justification**-in which righteousness not yet in evidence in your life has indeed been **imputed** but now it needs to be **imparted** -though sanctification and this is Gods will for you just as justification is.)*

(vi) There is **the path to walk with God** as distinct from times of prayer this is what has to be called communion. It involves talking to God and allowing Him to speak to you-a life of converse. It involves working with God and speaking and thinking in concert with the Lord’s will. It is all about His management of our everyday life and the **“Not I but Christ”** principle in full-blown operation. (a) Jesus at work said “The father works and I work”. Jesus (b) at prayer was ever communing with God on His part and support on the Father’s. Jesus (c) Jesus speaking said “My words are the words the Father gave me to speak” and if we take the apostle’s approach to the manner of our Lord’s thinking that is well illustrated in 1 Corinthians 13.4-8a and in Philippians 2 5-7 & 4.8-13 and finally (vii) **There is the curriculum to guide you** sometimes in the form of scriptural words of encouragements and sometimes in the imperatives of love –in the writings of the apostle Paul you will find over 300 such biddings for the saints. Amongst these are many calls to act in cohesion with the Holy Spirit and to endue yourself with His armour (for continuing victory that sees you still standing when the adversary has fled) and seek the fruitfulness that issues from His Love. **There is nothing in these biddings that conflicts with the practical principles above** and they will be found to issue as the life is fully yielded to the Lord the Spirit in abundance from the dynamic working of the Spirit in your heart. Holiness is not the laborious keeping of new rules but “the altar yielding” and transformed mind” and “purifying of the heart” We can say with the hymn-writer “Thus **provided, pardoned guided** nothing can our peace destroy.” And further we can say that the cross of Christ and the Resurrection and Pentecost was not trialled to set up a painful process of elimination of sin but to construct Christ-like lives by the operation of the divine dynamic of love exercised in us by the Holy Spirit and to promote the refined gold of Christian living –God’s best at our earliest- unless we declare

voluntary embargoes by *quenching the Spirit* or *ill reckoning* or *want of converse* or *avoiding the altar* or *abiding unforgiving* or *indulging an evil heart of unbelief* or by *putting on hold and delaying the curriculum* by a series of disobedient responses.

Thou Christ of burning cleansing flame,
Send the fire, send the fire!
Thy blood bought gift today we claim,
Send the fire send the fire!
God of Elijah her our cry!
Oh make us fit to live or die!
To burn up every trace of sin
To bring the light and glory in,
The revolution now begin.
To make our weak hearts strong and brave,
To live a dying world to save;
Oh, see us on Thy altar lay
Our lives our all this very day;
To crown the offering now we pray.

Send the fire!

(William Booth)

FINIS