

CHAPTER 13: HOLINESS

I WANT to speak to-night as briefly as is consistent with the discharge of my duty in relation to this topic, seeing that I am surrounded by brethren whose varied experiences may really be of more practical service to you than any statement I can make.

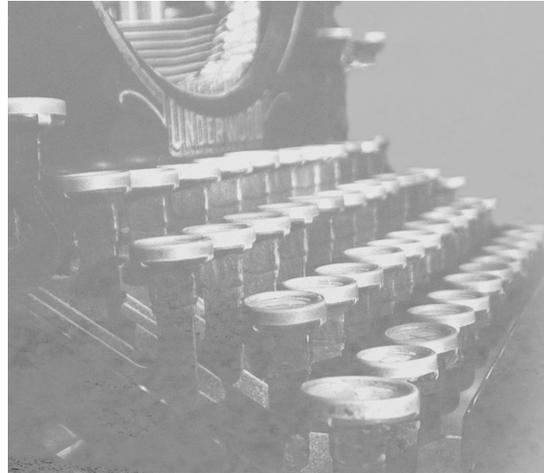
It seems to me that there is a large amount of uncertainty abroad amongst us on the subject of holiness. Many of our people appear to live in what may be called an indefinite land; they are all uncertainty and fear. If you ask the questions: "Have you got a clean heart? has the Lord made, and does He keep you holy?" you can get no distinct answer either one way or the other.

Now, this is largely the result of misapprehension. People don't know what is intended by a clean heart, or how it is to be got, or how it is to be kept; hence, on the one hand, it is not sought, or being sought and, as I believe, in many cases obtained, people are in such ignorance of where they are, and how they got there, as to be easily beguiled into unbelief, and so lose it. They have no knowledge of the devices of Satan, and so give him an advantage over them.

Now, to-night I want, if possible, to state plainly what at least our views are on this theme. In doing so, I may premise that I have no new truth to set forth; the doctrine is as old as the Book. May the Holy Spirit enable me to develop and explain it!

Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands in the front rank of our doctrines. We inscribe it upon our banners. It is with us in no shape or form an open debatable question as to whether God can sanctify wholly, or whether Jesus does save His people from their sins. In the estimation of The Salvation Army that is settled for ever: and any Officer who did not hold and proclaim the ability of Jesus Christ to save His people to the uttermost from sin and from sinning, I should consider out of place amongst us. But –

WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY HOLINESS?



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Here, perhaps, the surest way of making ourselves understood will be to begin with two or three simple statements of truth.

1. THAT ALL UNSAVED MEN ARE TOTALLY UNHOLY. We all hold that, when man reaches the age of accountability, grace finds him with a heart completely and thoroughly depraved – deprived of grace, without God, and under the power and domination of his selfish and sinful appetites. This condition is thorough – entire. In his flesh there dwelleth no good thing. We need not quote Scripture; we know that its testimony, no less than our experience and observation, describes and demonstrates the fact that man in his natural state is totally gone away from God, and that, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, he is all wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.

2. I WANT TO REMARK THAT HOLINESS, IN ITS BROAD SIGNIFICATION, MEANS SEPARATION FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND CONSECRATION TO GOD. Nay, it means that the soul is brought in to a state in which it has both the liberty and the ability to serve God as He desires, and that it constantly does so.

3. I REMARK THAT IN THE EARLY STAGES OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE THIS DELIVERANCE IS ONLY PARTIAL That is, although the soul is delivered from the domination and power of sin, and is no longer the slave of sin, still there are the remains of the carnal mind as roots of bitterness left in the heart, which springing up, trouble the soul, often lead it into sin, and which, if not continually fought against and kept under, grow up, attain their old power, and bring the soul again into bondage. Nevertheless in this state the soul when faithful has peace with God, the guidance, energy, and witness of the Holy Spirit, which together create in the soul a blessed certainty of salvation, and a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. All this is, however, perfectly compatible with the conscious existence of sin in the soul.

THIS DELIVERANCE FROM SIN may be ENTIRE. Not only can Agag be taken captive, but hewn in pieces. Sin can not only be held in bondage but destroyed – the Philistines can be entirely driven out of the land.

There are three broad and well-defined relations in which a man can stand towards



sin. He can be, First, UNDER SIN, Secondly, OVER SIN, 3rdly, WITHOUT SIN.

1. HE CAN BE UNDER SIN. Every man we have seen begins here. He is not only guilty and exposed to the PENALTY, which God has in infinite wisdom and benevolence attached to the transgression of that law, which constitutes the great axis on which the universe revolves. but he is under its POWER. Even when enlightened to see its cruel and ruinous character, and yearning for deliverance, he is powerless to free himself from its iron grip. He is a slave to the tyrant. He is under sin. But –

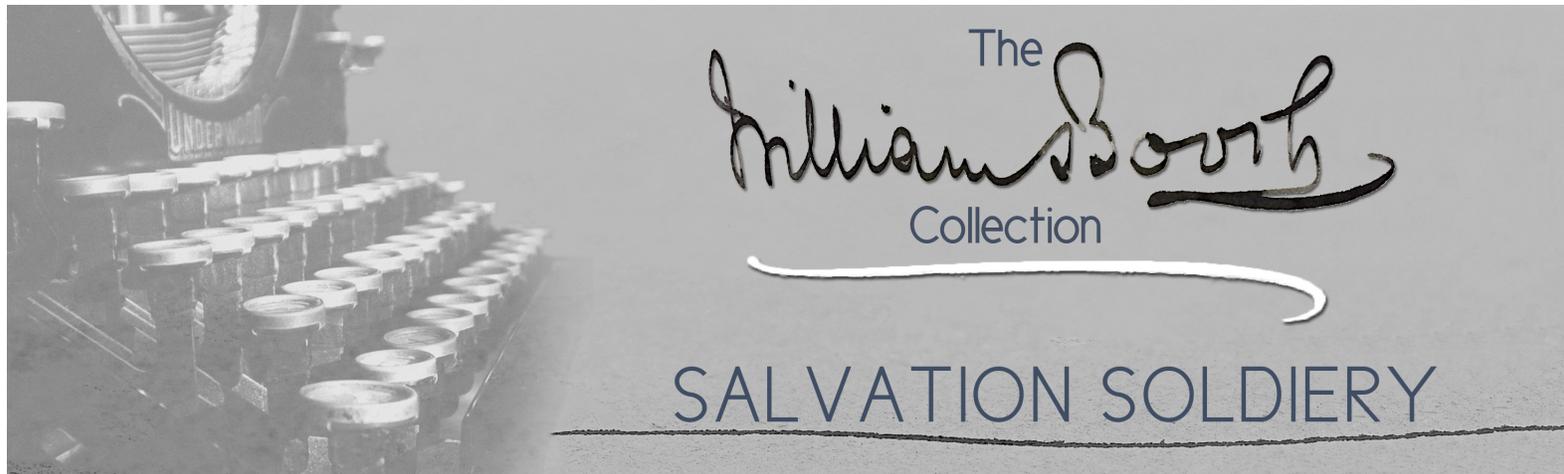
2. HE CAN BE OVER SIN. It may be that the pride, envy, anger, malice, lust, or whatsoever other evils ruled him with a rod of iron before; may be there. Bruised and broken and faint they may be, but still they exist; but the Master has taken them from the throne of the soul and given the saint power over them. He is now no longer under sin, but under grace. They – that is, the old habits and tempers and tendencies and inclinations – can still make their presence felt; they can whisper and suggest and claim and rise up, but they are no longer the masters. The Philistines are still there – the old proprietors of the land, but they are put under harrows and saws and instruments of iron, and held in bondage. The soul in this state has POWER OVER SIN.

But there is another state, and that is –

3. WITHOUT SIN. In which the promise of the Holy Ghost in Ezekiel is fulfilled when He says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you."

In this experience this engagement is fulfilled, and Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, and through them for all saints, is answered. The God of peace sanctifies wholly, and the whole body, soul, and spirit is preserved blameless.

Now, I am free to confess that about this state there may be difficulties and perplexities. I simply insist that it is described in the Bible, and that the descriptions of the Bible have been verified by the experience of thousands of saints. It means a clean heart, being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit – sanctified wholly, being made perfect in every good work, and God working in the soul all the



good pleasure of His will.

It implies –

1. Full deliverance from all known sin.
2. The consecration of every power and possession to God and His work.
3. Constant and uniform obedience to all the requirements of God.

Now don't let us get into confusion by mistaking each other.

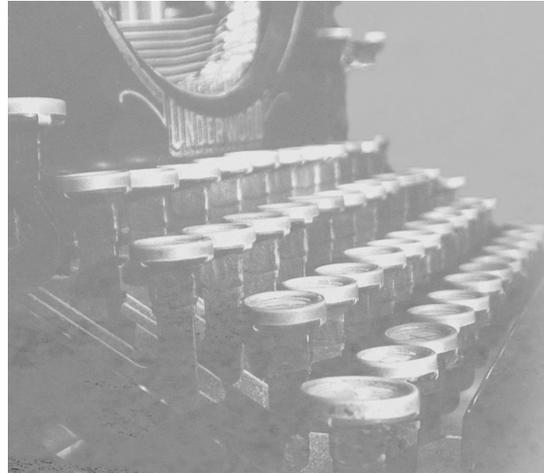
We don't say

Without imperfection, both physical and mental. We still suffer as the consequence of the fall from disease, and are liable to mistakes and errors, although I am not going to limit in this respect the power and willingness of the Holy Ghost to guide into truth and keep from error. There are some wonderful promises in the Bible, holding out some mighty possibilities in this direction. Who amongst us will prove the full extent of the Master's engagement to become unto us wisdom? and who will seek and enjoy to the uttermost that anointing of the Holy Ghost, which is to teach us all things?

Not without temptation. If the inside enemies have been cast out there are those without, and they will become in consequence all the more fierce and furious and cunning too, I may say, in their attempts to regain possession.

Nor without the possibility of falling. That is, of falling from this state. The angels of heaven, who kept not their first estate, and Adam, who unquestionably was sinless in Paradise, fell, and this side the celestial city it is a debatable question whether any condition can be reached from which we may not fall.

Nor is it merely without deliberate sin. There seems to me no state of saintship when a man can deliberately sin without losing the favour of God, and having to repent and go back to the fountain to regain it. "He that is born of God doth not commit sin."



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No! it is not without temptation, or trouble, or affliction, or error; it is still a condition of conflict, and suffering, and danger, but WITHOUT SIN. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and with a heart full of love to God, and everybody else, the soul has no consciousness of sin.

Now, there is the blessing of holiness, as I understand it, to be taught in the Scriptures; and I now want to ask you what you ought to do with regard to it; and to this question I reply –

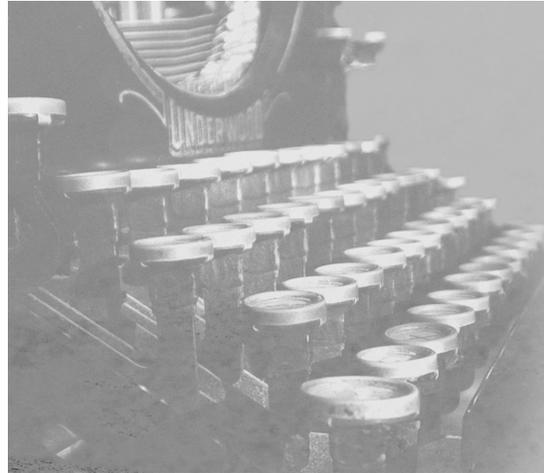
1. GET IT. It must strike every Christian as a pearl of great price. In every renewed soul there is an eye that can admire purity, and an appetite that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and an instinct that unceasingly yearns to be like the King's most admired daughter – all glorious within. You will never rightly understand it till you have it. Like all other problems in religious experience, it must be experienced to be understood.

Get it.

GET IT; but how? To this question I reply by asking two others, and the first is –

What is it that you want, to be made clean and happy and holy? You answer, your heart and life, your body, soul, and spirit, and all the activities that flow from them. Good and true! Then your first work is to bring all that you want thus sanctified to God: in other words, you must separate yourselves in choice and purpose, and, so far as you have power, from all known sin, or even that which is doubtful, and present all before God for the purpose of being thus sanctified. You can test yourself here. Do you want to be a holy man? Holy in thought, feeling, conversation, business, holy always, Sabbath and week days, holy altogether! Come along then, my brother, bring your brain, your heart, your tongue, your business, your family, your all, to God; It is no use crying to God to cleanse you wholly while keeping something back. For a full salvation you must bring an undivided consecration.

Reservation is one secret of the weakness prevalent among God's children, and the cause of three-fourths of the failures in this higher walk of the Divine life. It is



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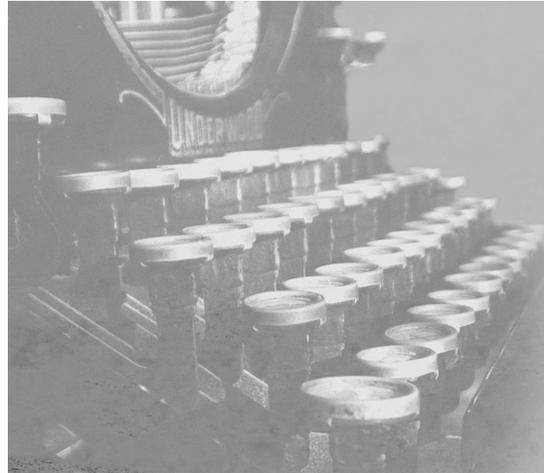
astonishing to find what trumpery, worthless idols are cherished and clung to by those who are really powerfully exercised on this subject. Let us make a clean sweep, and offer all. And then, my brethren, and then, my sisters, the Lord will say of you, "They have brought Me what I desire, what I have asked for, what I gave My Son's life-blood to buy, what I prize more than the sun and the stars and the world, – they have brought me their Hearts! Now make haste, and let us sprinkle them with blood to make them whiter than snow, and let us beautify and adorn and ennoble and dwell in them for ever."

And then, my brother, who is to accomplish this revolution in your soul, and finish the new creation already begun? Who is going to make you holy? Your evangelist, whom, you have been informed, enjoys and preaches the blessing? The holiness-meeting you love to attend? That strong will of yours? That book you are going to read? No, not these things all put together, nor your faith, nor the Book of books into the bargain. Let me ask, who saved you? The living God, and He is going to sanctify you. If ever done, He will do it. He will do it all. What follows? Why, simply this: that when you have brought yourself to God, you have nothing more to do but simply to trust Him. Roll yourself on His promise, plunge in the fountain, honour the blood: but, oh! do it NOW!

Some of you are old and grey-headed, and you have been hearing, and reading, and talking about this blessing a long, long time, but you are little or no forwarder, and, my brethren, you won't be until you trust the living God, and then it will be done at once.

Oh, how hard we are upon poor sinners who won't have pardon, and oh! how hard the angels are upon saints who won't have purity. All that is wanted is the presentation of yourself to God, and the simple trust that He does this moment fully save you. This is easy, and it is hard, my brethren, just because it is so easy. If He had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? Away to Jesus, then, and let Him do the work, and do it now.

To you, my brethren, as leaders of the armies of the God of Israel, I need not say how all important is the realisation and enjoyment of holiness.



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I. IT IS A CONDITION OF HAPPINESS. I think we may say, without fear of contradiction, that a man's happiness depends upon his RIGHTNESS. You are in the train, and suddenly it pulls up, far from any station, in the middle of some tunnel. Your wife gets nervous; you put your head out of the window, you can see nothing; but here comes the guard; you ask the reason, and he replies, "All right." You close the window, and recompose yourself for the continuance of your nap. But had there been a doubt as to something being wrong – a breakdown in the engine, or a train on before, or one coming just after, you would have been naturally afraid, and your comfort would have been gone until that fear of something wrong had been removed. No man can be happy while there is a fear in him that something is wrong.

Now here you stand for a few moments on the railroad of existence, with three great interests, each of which infinitely concerns you.

THERE IS THE PAST – the dark, sinful, imperfect past, with all its memories crowding in upon you. How do you stand with relation to it?

There is THE FUTURE, with its intricate and untrodden maze, its unexplored and unknown sorrows and joys, with the cold river of death, and the great white throne just beyond, and close by that throne there are the open gates of heaven and hell. How do you stand in relation to the future?

Then there is THE PRESENT, clustering with cares and anxieties, and burdens and duties, rising out of personal, family, and worldly relationships. Now, my brethren, you are every one of you face to face with such a past, such a future, and such a present: have you realised such a trust in the living God as brings into your hearts the springing happiness which flows from the sense of rightness and consequent safety in these relations? It is not "Can you say!" but "Do you feel!" that the past is under the blood, that the future is in the hands of a loving Providence who cannot, will not err, and that you really have nothing to do but to live the present moment to and for God? Oh, my brethren, none but holy men and women have reached this state, to be saved from fear and anxiety about past, present, and future, THOUGHTFULLY SAVED; and yet deep and abiding happiness is impossible without this.



2. HOLINESS IS INDISPENSABLE TO YOUR COMPLETEST USEFULNESS.

My comrades, you know the way of life and the blessedness of religion. You can tell something of the love of God and the joys of the redeemed. You can pray, and sing, and lead out to battle the armies of the King. What else is wanting to complete your qualifications for doing the greatest possible amount of good, but that you shall be able to say to your people that which I publish as attainable of personal peace and joy and communion with God – I enjoy myself? I am saved, Saved inside and out! Saved to the uttermost! Saved now and saved every day! Moreover, my brethren, there is something above and beyond the mighty influence which flows from, and must ever accompany, such a testimony as that I have named, and that is the mighty power that accompanies the life itself. A sanctified life means a gentle, tender spirit; it means a fearless, undaunted zeal; it means the accompanying manifestation of the Holy Ghost. It is the prelude and condition and assurance of the enduement of power; and, my brethren, the realisation of the blessing is –

3. THE CONDITION OF THE PERPETUAL INDWELLING OF GOD.

You often sing "Abide with me;" and you want Him not for a transient hour, but as an abiding guest. He is so far already the beloved of your soul that His presence makes your paradise, and where He is, is heaven. My brethren, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we shall have fellowship with Him, and He Himself has said, "if any man will keep My words. My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." With Him you have all things and abound, all things for present and future, for yourselves and your families and your people; the full equipment and qualification and guarantee of success in the great work of pulling down the kingdom of Satan and establishing and extending the kingdom of God.

Brethren, be ye holy, but be holy now.