

# The Interior Life

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Thomas C. Upham

ABRIDGED HOLINESS CLASSICS

PRINCIPLES  
of the  
INTERIOR or HIDDEN LIFE

*Designed particularly for the consideration of  
those who are seeking assurance of faith  
and perfect love*

THOMAS C. UPHAM

*Abridged by  
Olive M. Winchester, Th.D.*



Printed in U.S.A.  
1946

BEACON HILL PRESS  
2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

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## INTRODUCTION

In connection with the rise of the modern holiness revival one of the outstanding characters was Dr. T. C. Upham. Although not a minister, yet by means of his writings he taught the glorious truth of entire sanctification.

Dr. Upham was professor of mental and moral philosophy in Bowdoin College, Maine. His wife having been led into the fullness of the blessing by a Methodist sister, who had attended the holiness meeting held every Tuesday by Mrs. Palmer in her own home, requested that her husband be allowed the privilege of visiting the service. So it was arranged that this meeting hitherto for ladies only was opened to men. Subsequent to the first visit, Dr. Upham had a long talk with Mrs. Palmer. After plying her with many questions, his doctrinal difficulties were settled and he received the experience.

The first periodical ever to be published in the interests of the second work of grace was *The Guide to Holiness*. To this periodical Dr. Upham was a regular contributor. Among his earliest articles was a series entitled "Principles of the Interior Life." These articles were later incorporated in a book which we have had the privilege of abridging.

In discussing psychological phases, Dr. Upham naturally used the terminology and the concepts of his own day. We find the departmental psychology rather than the functional. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to translate from one system of psychology to the other and from the terms of his day to those of our own.

This book is unique in all holiness literature and has its special message. We trust that it will be made a blessing to many.

OLIVE M. WINCHESTER  
Pasadena, California

August 16, 1945

## CHAPTER ONE

### SOME MARKS OR TRAITS OF THE HIDDEN LIFE

There is a modification or form of religious experience which may conveniently, and probably with a considerable degree of propriety, be denominated the Interior or Hidden Life. When a person first becomes distinctly conscious of his sinfulness, and, in connection with this experience, exercises faith in Christ as a Saviour from sin, there is no doubt, however feeble these early exercises may be, that he has truly entered upon a new life. But this new life, although it is in its element different from that of the world, is only in its beginning. It embraces, undoubtedly, the true principle of a restored and renovated existence, which in due time will expand itself into heights and depths of knowledge and of feeling; but it is now only in a state of incipiency, maintaining, and oftentimes but feebly maintaining, a war with the anterior or natural life, and being nothing more at present than the early rays and dawns of the brighter day that is coming.

It is not so with what may be conveniently denominated the Hidden Life—a form of expression which we employ to indicate a degree of Christian experience greatly in advance of that which so often lingers darkly and doubtfully at the threshold of the Christian's career. As the Hidden Life, as we now employ the expression, indicates a greatly-advanced state of religious feeling, resulting in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind, we may perhaps regard the Psalmist, who had a large share of this interior experience, as making an indistinct allusion to it when he says, "Thou art my *hiding*

place, and my shield." And again, "He that dwelleth in the *secret place* of the Almighty." The apostle Paul also may be regarded as making some allusion to this more advanced and matured condition of the religious life, when, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" And again, addressing the Colossians, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and *your life is hid with Christ in God.*"

The term Hidden Life, which is appropriately and peculiarly the life of all those who, advancing beyond the first elements of Christianity, may properly be said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, indicates a vitality or living principle, which differs in various particulars from every other form of life.

In the first place, the life of those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High may be called a Hidden Life, because the animating principle, the vital or operative element, is not so much in itself as in another. It is a life grafted into another life. It is the life of the soul incorporated into the life of Christ; and in such a way, that, while it has a distinct vitality, it has so, very much in the sense in which the branch of a tree may be said to have a distinct vitality from the root. It buds, blossoms, and bears fruit in the strong basis of an eternal stock. "I am the vine," says the Saviour, "ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." This is a great mystery, but it is also a great truth. The Christian whose "life is hid with Christ in God" can never doubt that his spiritual existence and growth originate in, and are sustained in, that divine source alone.

In the second place, the life which we are considering may properly be called a Hidden Life, because its moving

principles, its interior and powerful springs of action, are not known to the world. This is what might naturally be expected from what has already been said in respect to the relation existing between a truly devoted Christian and his Saviour; inasmuch as he is taken from himself, and is grafted into another, and has now become a "new man in Christ Jesus." The natural man can appreciate the natural man. The man of the world can appreciate the man of the world. And it must be admitted that he can appreciate, to a considerable extent, numbers of persons who profess to be Christians, and who are probably to be regarded as such in the ordinary sense of the term, because the natural life still remains in them in part. There is such a mixture of worldly and religious motives in the ordinary forms of the religious state, such an impregnation of what is gracious with what is natural, that the men of the world can undoubtedly form an approximated, if not a positive, estimate of the principles which regulate the conduct of its possessors. But of the springs of movement in the purified or Hidden Life, except by dark and uncertain conjecture, they know comparatively nothing. Little can the men who, under the teachings of nature, have been trained up to the reception and love of the doctrine which inculcates "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" appreciate the evangelical precept which requires us, when we are assaulted, "to turn the other cheek." Still feebler and more imperfect is the idea which they form of that ennobling Christian philosophy which inculcates the love of holiness for holiness' sake. They are entirely at a loss, and, on any principles with which they are at present acquainted, they ever must be at a loss in their estimate of that intimacy and sacredness of friendship which exists between God and the sanctified mind. Rightly is it said in the Scriptures, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolish-



ness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Again, the Hidden Life has a claim to the descriptive epithet which we have proposed to apply to it, because, in its results upon individual minds, it is directly the reverse of the life of the world. The natural life seeks notoriety. Desirous of human applause, it aims to clothe itself in purple and fine linen. It covets a position in the market place and at the corners of the streets. It loves to be called rabbi. But the life of God in the soul, occupied with a divine companionship, avoids all unnecessary familiarities with men. It pursues a lowly and retired course. It obeys the precept of the Saviour, "When thou prayest, . . . enter into thy closet, and . . . pray to thy Father . . . which seeth in secret." It neither desires to see nor to be seen openly, except when and where duty calls it. It is willing to be little, to be unhonored, and to be cast out from among men. It has no eye for worldly pomp, no ear for worldly applause. It is formed on the model of the Saviour, who was a man unknown. He came into the world, the highest personage on the highest errand; and yet so humble in origin, so simple in appearance, so gentle in heart and manners, that the world could not comprehend Him; and He was ever a sealed book, except to those who had the key of the inner life to open it with.

In close connection with what has been said, we may remark further that the Hidden Life of religion is not identical with the place and with the formalities and observances of religion, nor is it necessarily dependent upon them. If it were so, it would no longer be hidden, but would be as much exposed to notice as that which is most expansive and attractive in the outward temple and in the external formality. It is true that places of worship and the various outward formalities of worship may be

its handmaids, and oftentimes very important ones, but they are not its essence. It has no essence but its own spiritual nature, and no true locality but the soul, which it sanctifies. It may be found, therefore, among all classes of men, and consequently in all places, occupying equally the purple of the king and the rags of a beggar; prostrating itself at the altar of the cathedral, or offering its prayer in the humble conventicle in the wilderness; like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, and "ye know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." And therefore, being what the Saviour has denominated it, "The Kingdom of God within you," and essentially independent of outward circumstances, it possesses a perpetual vitality.

These are general views and remarks, which will, perhaps, be better understood in the result. We do not think it necessary to dwell upon them longer at present. In conclusion, we would say, however, that the true Hidden Life has its *principles*—principles of origin and principles of perpetuity. The popular Christianity, that which exists in great numbers of the professed followers of Christ, has sometimes seemed, to those who have looked into its nature, to be a sort of chaos entirely irregular and confused, "without form, and void." The measurement, and almost the only measurement, of its vitality is excitation, temporary emotion. It is driven downward and upward, backward, forward, and transversely by the blind impulse of emotional power; so that if we seek it here, supposing it has a fixed principle of movement which will help to designate where it is, it is gone somewhere else; and if we seek it somewhere else, it has already altered its position. The true Hidden Life, refusing to be characterized by the fatal mark of inconstancy, has cast anchor in God; and its principles are the strong cable which holds it there. This is one thing which, if we estimate the subject correctly, the Church of God is called upon to learn

more fully; viz., that the true life of God in the soul has its principles—principles founded in wisdom, principles fixed and inflexible.

God never made a stone, an herb, a blade of grass, or any natural thing, however insignificant, nor does he sustain it for a moment, without a principle of action. It is impossible for God to operate accidentally. Whatever He does, He does by principle. And if this is true in natural things, it is equally so in spiritual things. God did not make, and does not sustain, the soul by accident. Nor does he raise it from its fallen condition, rekindle within it a renovated life, and bear it onward to present and eternal victory by a fortuitous aid, an accidental fatality. The new life in the soul, therefore, has its laws of beginning and progress, as well as every other form of life.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OF A LIFE OF SPECIAL SIGNS AND MANIFESTATIONS, AS COMPARED WITH A LIFE OF FAITH

There is often noted among the followers of Christ a tendency to seek for signs, tokens, and manifestations as the basis, in part at least, of their full reconciliation with God, and of a holy life. We are aware that this tendency arises, in some cases, from ignorance; but there can be no doubt that it has its origin chiefly in that dreadful malady of our nature, the sin of *unbelief*. But considered in any point of view, and as originating in any cause whatever, we cannot regard it as otherwise than wrong in principle, and as exceedingly injurious in its consequences. In reading, not long since, the Memoirs of the pious and devoted Lady Maxwell, our attention was directed to a consecration of herself to God, at an early period of her life, conceived in terms, which, as it seems to us, a more matured judgment and a more advanced experience of God's faithfulness, such as she had in the later periods of her life, would not have entirely approved. The portion of this interesting act of consecration, to which reference is here particularly made, is as follows: "If Thou, Lord, wilt manifest Thy dear Son to me, clear up my evidence of my interest in Him, shed abroad His love at all times in my heart, and let me feel Him ever drawing me to himself with the cords of love, and in times of trial make His strength perfect in my weakness, and not desert me in duty nor in temptation; if Thou, Lord, wilt do these great things for me, then, in Thy strength, I give myself unto Thee, soul, body, and spirit in the bonds of an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten." It seems to be a fair

inference, from these expressions, that this pious lady had an earnest desire, at the period of making this consecration, to devote herself entirely to God; but that she had not faith enough, or perhaps we might properly say, she was *afraid* to commit herself without reserve into the hands of her heavenly Father; which is the true idea of consecration, and without which no act of consecration can be of any value. In other words, she had not faith enough to make this important surrender or renunciation of self (a renunciation which is so indispensable to a full realization of the inward life) without some inward sign, some specific feeling; something, probably not very definitely represented even to her own conceptions, which should assure her, antecedently to the full surrender on her part, of the divine acceptance.

The signs, tokens, or manifestations, which both those who are seeking religion in the first instance, and those who are aiming at its highest attainments, not unfrequently ask for, either in express words or by the hidden language of the secret tendency of the mind, are various; but most of them may probably be brought together under three heads or classes. The *first* class are those which are external; sometimes an object of vision addressed to the outward hearing; or some remarkable combination of circumstances in relation to our persons or families; or something peculiar and striking in God's providences; or perhaps the suggestion of passages of Scripture of a certain character; or the personal appearance of the Saviour, revealed either in His earthly or His celestial body, and made present to the outward vision. The manifestation which was made to Paul in his journey to Damascus, when he saw a bright light shining from heaven and heard a voice, and perhaps also that of Stephen, when he saw the heavens opened and beheld the Saviour at the right hand of God, were of this class. The *second* class are those

which are external, but still are essentially of a perceptive or intellectual nature; that is to say, are not necessarily attended with an effect upon the heart. A person, for instance, may inwardly and intellectually have a revealed perception of heaven, of angels ascending and descending, of bright and rejoicing companies of the saints, or of any thing else which is a matter of knowledge and revelation, whether it has relation to the world of happiness or the world of woe. Such manifestations are not seen outwardly or by the outward sense; but when they are really from God, are made known by a divine communication operating in the intellectual part. And this is done so distinctly as entirely to control belief; though it is not necessarily attended with holy emotion. We have an instance of this in the apostle Paul, when, without knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body, he was caught up, as it were, into the third heaven, and beheld things unutterable.

The *third* class are peculiarities in emotive and affective experience; in other words, the existence of specific emotions and affections of a peculiar kind; such as the experience of sorrow in a very intense degree, or a peculiar strength and fulness of joy, or a deep and silent awe, or an indefinable melting of the heart in rapturous ecstasies. And not unfrequently we characterize the emotion or affection, which we seek for as the sign or testimony of our good estate, by its likeness to the alleged experience of some of our religious acquaintances. In other words, we desire a form of experience like theirs; not only resembling it in its nature, but resembling it in its modifications or peculiarities. It is the peculiarity, the specific character of the thing which, in these cases, more than the thing itself independently of the peculiarity, seems to constitute the sign.

But whatever the specific thing may be, there can be no doubt as to the general fact, viz., that a special experience of some kind, either inward or outward, either in the perceptions or the feelings, is often desired and sought after, and is sometimes made an absolute condition, both by those who are seeking religion in the first instance, and by those who are seeking the additional grace of sanctification, before they are willing to trust themselves in the hands of God to be wholly and unreservedly His. In order to exercise faith in God, they must have something to build upon besides God himself—a striking proof of the deep distrust and unbelief of the human heart, and how blind man is when left to himself, and how surely he would rush to his own destruction.

1. In view of what has been said in this chapter, we remark, in the first place, that God does not design that men in the present life should live by means of specific signs, testimonies, or manifestations, but by simple faith alone. The great design of the gospel, in its practical and final result on man, seems to be to restore and firmly establish the lost principle of faith, as the true and only available basis of the religious life. And there seems to be a necessity that it should be so. From the nature of the case, there never can be any true reconciliation and harmony between God and His creatures until they can so far have confidence in Him as to receive His declarations, and to draw their life, as it were, from the words which have proceeded out of His mouth. In any other way of living, whatever may be the nature of their inward or outward experiences, they live at variance with the order and the plans of God; out of the line of His precepts; and of course, in the same degree, out of the range of His blessings. And hence it is that we find the remarkable expressions of the Saviour to the doubting disciples, "Be-

cause thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed."

And we desire here, as a matter of some importance, to lay down a practical test or rule on this subject. It is this: Whenever we desire a specific experience, whether inward or outward, whether of the intellect or the affections, antecedently to the exercise of faith, we are necessarily, in so doing, seeking a sign, or testimony, or something, whatever we may choose to call it, additional to the mere declaration and word of God. There is obviously a lingering distrust in the mind, which jostles us out of the line of God's order; which is not satisfied with His way of bringing the world into reconciliation with himself; and under the influence of which we are looking round for some new and additional witness for our faith to rest upon. In other words, although we may not be fully conscious of it, we desire a *sign*. In the language of the experienced Mr. Fletcher, of Madely, "we want to see our own faith"; a state of mind which, as it requires sight to see our faith with, in other words, a basis of faith additional to that which God has already given, is necessarily inconsistent with and destructive of faith. This simple test will aid very much in revealing to us the true state of our hearts. We repeat, therefore, that we may in general know whether the experience which we are seeking is, or is not, of the nature of a testimony or sign required of God as the condition of our faith and obedience, by the mark which has been mentioned; viz., when we seek for it, whatever it is, antecedent to that exercise of faith which is willing to leave what we desire, and everything which has relation to us, submissively in the hands of God.

2. We remark, again, that the life of specific signs, testimonies, and manifestations is not only evil by being a deviation from the way of faith, but is evil also by keeping alive and cherishing the selfish principle instead of



destroying it. He who seeks to live in this manner, instead of living by simple faith, and who thus shows a secret preference for specific experiences, modeled after his own imagination of things, to that pearl of great price, which is found in leaving all things with God, necessarily seeks to have things in his own way. The way of faith is the way of self-renunciation; the humbling and despised way of our personal nothingness. The way of signs, testimonies, and manifestations is the way of one's own will; and therefore naturally tends to keep alive and nourish the destructive principle of selfishness. The lives of those who attempt to live in this way, with some variations in particular cases, may be regarded as an evidence of the general correctness of these remarks. They seem like children brought up in an unwisely indulgent manner; not unfrequently full of themselves, when they are gratified in the possessions of their particular object, and full of discouragement, peevishness, and even of hostility which are the natural results of the workings of self, when they are disappointed.

3. We observe, in the third place, that another evil of that system of the religious life which is based upon signs and upon preconceived and prescribed manifestations and experiences, is, that it exposes persons to alternations and reverses of feeling, which are injurious to the subjects of them, and are prejudicial to the cause of religion in the eyes of the world. Remarkable manifestations and experiences (and those who have entered into this system are not generally satisfied with any thing short of what is remarkable) are usually, and, from our present physical and mental constitution, perhaps we may say, are *necessarily* of short continuance. While the manifestations or specific experiences, whatever they may be, continue, the mind is in a state of wondering and generally joyous excitement. But when the termination of

these seasons comes, which is commonly proximate in proportion to their wonderful nature, then succeeds the period of mental depression, of darkness that can almost be felt, of horrible temptations; Satan saying to the soul continually, "Where now is thy God?" And how can it well be otherwise, when those who take this erroneous course pray and wrestle, oftentimes perhaps without being fully aware of it, for sight rather than for faith, and for revelations which gratify the natural curiosity, rather than for righteousness which purifies the heart?

4. We observe, again, that it is impossible, as it seems to us, for God to bring a soul to the highest results of religion, and truly to sanctify it, so long as it continues in this disposition of seeking a sign, and attempts to live spiritually by means of signs; or that in any other way proposes to regulate God, and to prescribe conditions to Infinite Love. One expression, and a very satisfactory one, of sanctification, is, *union with the divine will*; in other words, having no will but God's: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And it is this union of spirit with spirit, of will with will, which God especially requires. And just so far as there is a divergence of the human will from the divine, just in that degree it is very evident there is, and must be, a want of holiness. Now, God's will (and in the infinitude of His perfections it cannot be otherwise) is, that we should trust Him, both His character and His declarations; that, in respect to His various dealings with us—dealings which of course indicate His designs and purposes—we should lie submissive and passive in His hands; and that the language of our hearts should be, at all times, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." But he who seeks a sign, an inward or outward testimony, a specific and preconceived manifestation of any kind as the basis of the inward life, either in its beginning or its advancement; in other words, who says to the Lord, "Do

this thing, or that thing" (whatever it may be), "and then I will give Thee my heart, and believe in Thee," obviously fails to exercise the required trust in God. And consequently, being wanting in the true spirit of harmony and union with God, he cannot rightly be regarded, while remaining in this state, as a person to whom the character of sanctification or holiness either is, or can be, properly ascribed.

5. We remark, finally, that a life of faith, in distinction from a life of manifestations, is not necessarily, as some seem to suppose, exclusive of *feeling*. The difficulty which exists in the minds of those who entertain the idea that a life of faith is a life without feeling, arises from that limited view of things which considers faith in its own nature, exclusive of its relations and results. And it may be well to say here, that a thing is never properly understood, and cannot be properly understood and known, unless it is understood and known in its relations and results, as well as in itself. And on this ground, therefore, we assert, the relations and results of faith are such, that it is a great mistake to say that a life of faith is a life without feeling.

In our inquiries into the nature of the religious life, we wish, if possible, to ascertain the foundation principle, the cornerstone. And we cannot have any hesitation in saying, both from the Scriptures and from the nature and reason of the thing, that this principle is, and must be, *faith*. Undoubtedly, there may be feeling of some kind without faith, but there cannot be truly acceptable *religious* feeling without it. Faith must precede. I think we may lay it down as a fixed and unalterable principle, that any feeling, however strong it may be, which exists antecedent to faith, or which exists irrespective of faith, can never be relied on as of a truly religious and saving value. But if the true doctrine is that faith should go

first, it is nevertheless true that feeling will come after. In all cases where there is faith (we mean *religious* faith, viz., in God, in Christ, and in all divine declarations), feeling in its various forms, and, what is very important, the right kind of feeling, will naturally and necessarily flow out. It will be such feeling as God approves; it will be such feeling as filled the bosom of the Saviour while here on earth; always appropriate to the occasion; sometimes gentle and sometimes strong; sometimes characterized by joy and sometimes by sorrow, always bearing the marks of purity and benevolence; but always, when the exercise of faith exists in the highest degree, distinguished by the beautiful trait of calmness and peace.

We might pursue this important subject further, but we leave it with a single observation, accompanied by a reference to an experienced and able writer. We desire it to be understood, as consistent with what has been said, that such specific signs, revelations, and manifestations, and also such peculiarities of the more inward and emotional or effective experience as have been referred to in the present chapter, are good in their place. And if it be inquired what their place is, the proper answer seems to be, when they are sent of God, *unsought by the creature*. It is the prerogative of God to glorify himself in His own way. It is alike the privilege and the duty of men to leave themselves submissively in His hands. If God, in the wisdom of His unsearchable providence, sees fit, for special purposes and on special occasions, to make remarkable revelations of eternal things as He did on a few occasions to Stephen and Paul and John, or in any other ways to impart some marked peculiarities to our experience, we are to receive them in a becoming temper of mind. And to such occasions the humble Christian, who is deeply impressed with his own ignorance and dependence, and

desires nothing but that he may be holy, will cheerfully leave them.

“If God indulge you,” says Mr. Fletcher, of Madely, “with ecstasies and extraordinary revelations, be thankful for them, but be not exalted above measure by them. Take care, lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them; and remember that your Christian perfection does not so much consist in building a tabernacle upon Mount Tabor to rest and enjoy *rare sights there*, as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud Caiaphas, to the judgment-hall of an unjust Pilate, and to the top of an ignominious Calvary. Ye never read in your Bible, ‘Let that glory be upon you which was also upon Stephen, when he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”’ But ye have frequently read there, ‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and . . . being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’”

### CHAPTER THREE

## ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LOVE AND JOY

Perfect Love, it would seem, is to be regarded, on the principles of the gospel, as essentially the same thing, or rather as precisely the same thing, as Sanctification or Holiness. But it is proper to say here, that some degree of observation and inquiry has given occasion to the remark, that some persons, who are truly seeking the sanctifying power of assured faith and perfected love, and who suppose that they are seeking it in the right way, have nevertheless committed the dangerous error of confounding joy and love; and are in fact, without being fully aware of it, seeking after a state of highly joyful and rapturous excitement instead of true love. It is to some mistake of this kind that the pious Lady Maxwell probably has reference, when she says, "The Lord has taught me that it is by *faith*, and *not by joy*, I must live." It seems to me, therefore, important, in order to understand the true foundation of the Christian life, to draw the distinction between joy and love. This is the object of the present chapter.

1. In endeavoring to point out the distinction between joy and love, which, it must be admitted, cannot be satisfactorily done without careful consideration, we proceed to remark, in the first place, that the distinction is very properly made, in philosophical writers, between *emotions* and *desires*; and that joy is to be regarded as an emotion rather than a desire. Regarded as an emotive state of the mind, joy, like the emotions generally, naturally terminates in itself; that is to say, a person may be the subject of highly-raised joyful emotions, and at the

same time may remain inactive. He may be wholly occupied with the ecstatic movement of his own feelings, and be destitute of thought, feeling, and action for others. But the leading characteristic of love—that in particular which distinguishes it from mere joy—is the element of *desire*. It is the nature of love, as it is the nature of everything else of which desire is the prominent element, not to stop or terminate in itself, but to lead to something else. And furthermore love, like other benevolent affections, is not only active in relation to others, but is active for the *good* of others. We have here, therefore, an important ground of distinction. If Christians were filled with joyful feelings merely, they might, being destitute of other principles of action, remain slothful at their own firesides, and see the world perish in their sins. But love, on the contrary, is sweetly and powerfully impulsive; and constrains us, especially if it be strong, to do good in every possible way to our fellow men. And hence the expression of the apostle, “The love of Christ *constraineth* us.”

2. In the second place, joy may be founded on selfish considerations. But love, certainly that which God recognizes and requires—that disinterested or pure love of which we have already given some account—is always benevolent. It is sometimes the case, in consequence of a wrong position of our minds, that we may even rejoice in the evil or suffering of others. We may be very well pleased, very happy, when we see them perplexed, misrepresented, and injured. But it does not appear how we can at such times be said to *love* them. Joy, therefore, may go where love will not follow. Joy may have a field of action which love has not. Accordingly, we can conceive of the devils rejoicing. They may rejoice, and undoubtedly do rejoice, in the misery of each other. It is their nature. Evil is their good. But we cannot conceive how they can love.

3. We remark, in the third place, that in love there is always something elevating, ennobling, and purifying to the soul. It is the great source and fountain of generous and exalted actions. It is the secret and powerful spring of religious magnanimity, of holy heroism. But the tendency of joy is, in itself considered, and independently of other principles, to create in the mind a species of spiritual sensuality. It leads the soul (at least such is its tendency, unless accompanied by other principles) to sit quietly and inactively in the easy chair of its own gratification. It thinks too much of itself, to have the power of thinking much of others. Its tendency, therefore, *in itself considered, and independently of other principles of action*, is to turn the mind off from the highest good. It may even have the effect (and it is believed that the experience of some Christians on this point will confirm the statement) to remove the mind, in some degree, from God himself and from Christ and from the Holy Ghost, upon whom it ought always to rest. And this, certainly, is a result which is greatly to be deplored.

4. It will be recollected, in the fourth place, that a leading characteristic of love, as already has been remarked, is *desire*; a state of mind which may very properly be distinguished from an emotion. Accordingly, we can never love an object, without desiring the good of that object. In the exercise of love, we carefully notice those occasions on which we may have it in our power to promote the good or happiness of the beloved object, and are faithful to improve them. When our love is decided and strong, we are oftentimes much more solicitous to secure the welfare and happiness of the beloved person than our own. The state of mind, as already intimated, is not quiescent, but impulsive: it impels to action; and not to selfish, but benevolent action. Observe the love of a parent to a child. Perhaps the child may be deformed in



body or mind, or both. There may be nothing especially attractive either in its person, conduct, or prospects; and yet the heart of the parents constantly goes out toward the child in acts of kindness. It is in accordance with these views, that we find mention in Scripture of those who received the word of God with joy, and yet soon withered away. And why? Because, with all their joy, they had not the abiding root of *love*. They were the subjects of a temporary pleasurable excitement, but had never experienced a new direction and bent of the heart. True love, clinging to the object of the affections, is permanent; joy is often evanescent.

5. We remark, further, as a natural consequence of what has been said, that the love of God, as it exists in the minds of those who are His devoted followers, always inquires after His will. It does not ask for ease, pleasure, reward; nor, on the other hand, does it ask for trial, suffering, and contempt; it merely asks for the Father's will. Its language is that of the Saviour, when He says, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" And as, in common life, we think much of a person that is beloved, and desire his favor and approbation, so, in regard to God, if we truly love Him, He will be very much in our thoughts, and His approbation and favor will be to us of great price. If He is the highest object of our love, we shall desire no higher happiness than that of constant communion with Him, and of being always united to Him by oneness of will. Thus we may be said to be in Him, and He in us; and that eternal rest of the soul, which constitutes the true heaven, will be commenced here.

In view of what has been said, one or two remarks may be made. And the first is, if we are truly sanctified to the Lord—in other words, if we love God with all our hearts—our course as Christians will be a consistent and stable one. Our rule of action will be the will of God; our

principle of action will be the love of God. And as the will of God is fixed, and is made known to us in various ways, especially in His holy Word, we shall endeavor to fulfill it at all times humbly and faithfully, without regard to those temporary and changing feelings which too often perplex the religious life.

It may be remarked, further, in conclusion, that in the state of mind which has been spoken of, we shall not fail of any consolation which is needful for us. It belongs to the very nature of desire, that, when the desire is gratified, we are more or less happy. Accordingly, in exercising love to God, the leading element of which is desire, and in doing and suffering His holy will, in accordance with such desire, we cannot be otherwise than happy in a considerable degree. If we seek joy or happiness as an ultimate object, we cannot fail, on religious principles, to miss it. If, under the promptings of love, we seek merely to do and suffer the will of God, we shall certainly, except in those cases where God, by a special act of sovereignty, withdraws consolation in order to try our faith, possess all that consolation which will be needful. And in the case which has just been mentioned, if our faith, still trusting in the beloved object, sustains the terrible shock of apparent desertion (as when our Saviour exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"), we shall soon find abundant consolation returning.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL JOY

We have endeavored, in the preceding chapter, to point out the distinction between love and joy; a distinction not very obvious at first sight, but which really exists, and is important to be made. But it is proper to add here, that the views of the chapter may be somewhat aided, and perhaps modified in their *practical application*, in connection with a distinction, which yet remains to be made, and which may very properly be made, between *natural* joy and *spiritual* joy. It is true that gracious or spiritual joy is not to be confounded with love, any more than natural joy is. In both cases, the distinction between love and joy is a real and permanent one. But then there remains the additional view, which will help to throw further light upon the subject before us, that gracious or holy joy differs, in some of its aspects, from natural joy.

1. We proceed then to remark, in the first place, that natural joy and spiritual joy are different in their origin. Natural joy, which is sometimes denominated "the joy of the world," arises from natural causes: from physical or worldly good; from health, property, worldly influence, the indulgences of sense; from such causes, in a word, as we might suppose to exist, and to produce joy within us, if we had no perception of a God and no knowledge of religion. Spiritual or gracious joy, which is spiritual or gracious in its origin, arises from the knowledge of spiritual objects, from the discharge of spiritual or religious duties, and from the inspiring agency of the Holy Ghost. And hence it is sometimes denominated the "joy of the Holy Ghost."

2. Again, natural joy, arising from natural principles, and unchecked and unregulated by gracious influences, has oftentimes a very powerful effect upon the physical system. And it is possible, and even probable, that this may sometimes be the case with true spiritual or gracious joy; especially when the emotion is strong and immediately successive to a painfully depressed and suffering state of mind. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that, in some cases, when powerful physical results are found to exist, there may be a union or combination of natural and gracious emotion. But it is nevertheless true, that the natural tendency of spiritual joy, *in itself considered*, and independently of *any peculiar circumstances*, is, in a remarkable degree, and much more so than that of mere natural joy, to produce a tranquilizing effect upon the mind, and through the mind upon the physical system, and to promote soundness and regularity of action.

3. We observe, in the third place, that there is a tendency in natural joy, especially when it is strong, to perplex the action of the perceptive and discriminating or judging powers. This is true of the natural emotions generally, when they are in an excited state. Any considerable agitation in that portion of our sensitive nature, which is termed the *emotions*, is commonly understood to be unfavorable to correct perception and judgment. A man, for instance, who is agitated with emotions of displeasure, of jealousy, or of fear will find it difficult, while remaining in such state of agitation, to go through successfully with an intricate train of mathematical or other reasoning. And the result will be the same if he is considerably agitated with emotions of natural pleasure or joy. But true spiritual joy, when undisturbed by unfavorable influences from the physical system, and unmixed with natural joy, leaves the mind tranquil, and the perceptive and discriminating faculties clear and effective in the highest degree.

And these views seem to be confirmed by a consideration of the state of holy beings. All holy beings, there can be no doubt, experience true joy of heart; but in our reflections on their mental character and operations, it is certain that we never conceive of them as having their minds clouded and their perceptive powers blunted by excessive emotion. The natural feelings, which are regulated with difficulty, continually run into excess; but this is never the case with those truly religious or gracious feelings which are really inspired by the Holy Ghost. And therefore, when it is said of the disciples on a certain occasion (Luke 24:41), that they "believed not for joy," it is probable that they experienced an excitement and confusion of mind, resulting from a mixture of natural joy with emotions of a holy kind.

4. It remains to be remarked, further, that natural joy is often attended with certain incidental evils, which are not likely to exist in connection with gracious or holy joy; such as an undue hilarity of spirit, a sort of unreflecting and too youthful levity and flightiness of thought and manner, unsuitable to our age or our situation in life; what George Fox, in speaking of some Christians in his day, expressively describes as "Being up in the airy mind." On the other hand, holy joy, when it is free from any mixture and perversion of natural joy, is deliberately and deeply serious. When natural joy is superadded, or is superinduced upon a truly spiritual or gracious experience, and gives a character to our actions, it is possible that there may be sometimes results bordering upon those airy and flighty manifestations which have been mentioned; but whenever this is the case, it is certain that these results do not flow from any state of mind which is truly the work of the Holy Spirit. Religious or sanctified joy, always bearing the stamp of deliberation and wisdom, always in keeping with that seriousness which

naturally flows out of the truths and the responsibilities of religion, is entirely suited to the objects and occasions on which it arises so as to leave in the mind both the appearance and the fact of perfect tranquility—such as there is in God himself, who may be said to be always happy, always joyful, and yet to be always serious and unalterably tranquil. This joy seems to me to be often expressed in the Scriptures by the word *peace*; and is probably the precise state of mind, the delightful legacy of all true Christians, which the Saviour had in view when He said to His disciples, “*Peace* I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.” Such a joy may be strong: in the language of Scripture, it may be “unspeakable and full of glory:” but it is always calm and peaceful; and in this respect is entirely different from that excited and unprofitable intoxication of spirit, which is sometimes found to be experienced, and which so possesses and agitates the mind that the will of God, and our duty, cannot be clearly perceived.

5. Finally, holy joy, being founded in the perception of the character, attributes, and will of God is not necessarily liable to changes. He who rejoices in God today, having a correct view of His character and will, will never find good reason to do otherwise than rejoice in that character and will, in all coming time; and simply because God, in His character and His will, is always the same. In all afflictions and trials, of whatever nature, there will still remain the basis of a serene and pure joy in the depths of the heart. But natural joy, being founded upon natural objects, which are frail, uncertain, and full of imperfection, necessarily partakes of the uncertainty and imperfect nature of its causes. And hence it is said, in the portion of Scripture already referred to, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy [that is, with natural joy, as we are probably to

understand it]; and these have no *root*, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." So that holy or spiritual joy may be compared to the sun, which always shines with its pure and beautiful light, even when wrapped in clouds; but natural joy is like a meteor, gleaming for a moment, and then extinguished; rekindled again after a time, but destined soon and suddenly to sink in still greater darkness.

In connection with the marks which thus separate natural from spiritual joy, we observe, in conclusion, that spiritual joy, being a truly Christian grace, is exceedingly valuable and desirable; and truly blessed is he who possesses that state of mind which is properly called "joy in the Holy Ghost." It is true, it is a grace both subsequent in time and inferior in rank to *love*, which ought to be sought first as the reigning and controlling principle of the soul. But it is, nevertheless, in its appropriate time and place, one of the precious gifts and graces of God.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ON THE NATURE AND RELATIONS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Some of the remarks and positions in the last two chapters seem to prepare the way for a few general observations, which are of considerable practical importance, on what may be termed the *emotional* form of religious experience.

The doctrine, which we propose to advance on this somewhat difficult subject, may be regarded as implying the admission of two things: *first*, that the mind, in some important and true sense, is departmental; that it exists in the three departments of the Intellect, the Sensibilities, and the Will; and that the emotional or emotive states constitute a distinct and important subordinate division in these departments: and *second*, that the operations of the Holy Spirit on the human mind are various; that they may embrace the whole of these departments, reaching and controlling the whole mind; or that, under certain circumstances, they may stop either at the intellectual department or at the emotive division of the sensitive department, producing certain important results, but leaving others without being realized.

1. We proceed then to remark, in the first place, that it is the office of the Holy Spirit to operate, on the appropriate occasion of such operation, upon the human intellect; and especially by guiding it in the perception of the truth. The mode of the Spirit's operation upon the intellectual part, as it is upon other parts of the mind, is in many respects mysterious; but the ordinary result of His influences is the communication of truth; that is to say,



the soul, when it is thus operated upon, knows spiritually what it did not know before. And it may properly be added, that the knowledge which is thus communicated will vary, both in kind and degree, in accordance with the nature of the subject or facts to be illustrated, and with the special circumstances, whatever they may be, which render a divine communication necessary. But it is not ordinarily to be expected that the operation, of which we are now speaking, will stop with the intellect. By an original law of our mental nature, the perception of truth, which is the result of an intellectual act, is ordinarily followed by an effect upon that portion of the mind which is usually designated as the emotional or emotive susceptibility; a part of the mind which, as it is subsequent in the time of its action, is sometimes figuratively described "as being back of the intellect." The effect upon the emotive susceptibility, resulting from an operation on the intellect, will be different at different times and under different circumstances; varying in nature and degree, according to the nature and degree of the truth which is presented, and also, in part, in accordance with its own previous situation at the time of its being affected. The truth, for instance, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, will be attended with very pleasant emotions in one who feels himself to be a sinner and to stand in need of a Saviour; but will not likely be attended with any such effect in one with whom this is not the case. We can suppose, therefore, notwithstanding the general law which has just now been specified, an operation of the Holy Spirit upon the intellect, which is attended with no beneficial, with no sanctifying and saving effect upon the heart. Indeed, there are some cases, where the truth which is impressed by a divine operation upon the intellect is met and rejected, in the sensibilities, with feelings of opposition and contempt. But an experience of this nature,

which meets with no acceptance beyond the intellect, although it may have its origin intellectually in the operation of the Spirit of God, is not regarded as religious experience; and therefore it is not necessary to dwell longer upon it here.

2. But let us look at the subject a little further. It is well known, that there are instances quite different from those which have just been referred to. We will suppose, therefore, the case of a person who is the subject of a divine operation. Under the influence of this inward operation, he experiences, to a considerable extent, new views of his own situation, of his need of a Saviour, and of the restoration of his soul to God in spiritual union. The operation which has been experienced, so far, is purely intellectual. Of the necessity and value of such intellectual influences, there can be no doubt; but I believe it is generally conceded that, in themselves alone, they do not, and cannot, constitute religion. But in addition to this, we will suppose that an effect, and perhaps a very decided effect, has been experienced in the emotive part, which in its action is subsequent to that of the intellect. The person has very pleasant emotions. The perception of new truth, as we should naturally expect, gives him happiness; and the perception of its relation to his salvation gives him still more happiness. He is very happy. He begins to speak a new language. His mouth is filled with praise. And others praise the Lord on his account.

But has such a person religion, as his friends are very desirous to believe, and are very apt to declare? He has an *experience*, undoubtedly. We are willing to admit that he has a valuable experience—an experience which is naturally preparatory to religion, and is closely connected with it, and looks very much like it. But if the experience stops here, in such a manner as to constitute a merely

emotional experience, and without reaching and affecting a still more inward and important part of the mind, as seems sometimes to be the case, we cannot with good reasons regard it as a truly religious experience; meaning by the terms an experience which meets the expectations and the demands of God, and which is saving. It is valuable; it is encouraging; it is closely connected with religion; but it is not the thing itself. We may perhaps designate it as a preparative or incident to religion without being religion; and although we may thank the Lord for what it is, especially in its hopeful relations, it is still true that the essential and indispensable element of the inward life is not there.

3. There are mental susceptibilities, which, on account of their being subsequent in the time of their action, may be described as lying back of the emotive part of the mind, as truly as the emotions can be said to lie back of the intellectual part. In making this remark, we have especial reference to the desires in their various modifications—particularly those modifications which are denominated the affections—and to the will. Any religion, or rather *pretense* of religion, which is not powerful enough to penetrate into this region of the mind, and to bring the affections and will into subjection to God, is in vain. It is an important fact, and as melancholy as it is true, that a person may be spiritually enlightened and have new views on the subject of religion, and that he may also have very raised and joyful emotions, and yet may be a slave to his natural desires. He has not experienced what everyone must experience who would enter into communion with the Divine Mind, viz., *the death of nature*. He loves the things of the world more than the things of God. Many, very many, are the instances which can verify this remark. As the result of their intellectual illumination, the persons to whom these statements will apply are un-

doubtedly in advance of what they were previously, and are able to talk fluently on the subject of religion. And, in consequence of some premature application of the Saviour's merits to their own case, they can speak of pleasures and of hopes which they never before experienced. But only urge upon them the necessity of self-crucifixion; only touch the idols which they cherish in their inner heart; and they discover at once the dominion which the world has over them still. God has not become the life of the soul. At a proposition so necessary to the life of God and so repugnant to the life of nature, the spirit of untamed and almost unmitigated evil, which reposed so closely and secretly in their bosoms, will start into existence with features of opposition and malignity altogether at variance with the peace and purity of a holy heart.

a) In connection with this subject, one or two remarks may properly be made. And one is, that we may probably discover in these principles the reason why it is, that, in times of especial religious attention, so many persons, who appeared to be much engaged in religion for a season, subsequently lose their interest, and become, both in practice and feeling, assimilated to the world. Such persons are undoubtedly the subjects of an inward experience; and this experience, in common parlance, is frequently called a religious experience; but it is obviously defective in the essential particular of not having a *root*. "But he that received the word into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself." Notwithstanding their increased ability and readiness to converse on the subject of religion, and the exhibitions which they make of emotion, sometimes of high emotion, they do not understand what it is to place themselves a living sacri-

face upon the divine altar. They do not appreciate, and still less do they realize in their own hearts and lives, the "all of God and nothing of the creature."

b) Another remark is this: We would not have it inferred, from what has been said, that we regard what we denominate emotional experience as being without value. It is true, that such experience is valueless when it stops in itself, and becomes nothing more than mere emotional experience. But though valueless in itself, it is not valueless in its relations; and especially it is not so, when it is followed by those results to which we naturally expect it to lead. And hence we may properly say, in estimating the experiences which the mind is likely to pass through in seasons of religious attention, that it is a matter of some encouragement when light is communicated to the intellect, though in a small degree. It is matter of encouragement also, and still more, when we see these intellectual impressions followed by a consentient and gratified movement in the emotions. But the danger is in encouraging those who are the subjects of them, in believing that they are religious, when they are merely the subjects of that which, in a favorable aspect of it, can be regarded only as preparatory to religion. This danger, which is imminent, and in many cases has proved destructive, ought to be carefully guarded against; especially by those who, as ministers of the gospel, and as professed religious teachers, are supposed to have a better acquaintance than others with the facts and principles of religious experience.

c) In concluding the remarks of this chapter, we take the liberty to urge upon all who wish to live the true inward life, the importance of not resting satisfied with mere intellectual light, however valuable it may be; of not resting satisfied with joyful, or any other emotions, which stop and terminate in themselves; and of acting in-

variably upon the principle, that nothing ought to satisfy God, but the subjection of every natural desire, and the substitution of desires, affections, and purposes which terminate in God, and God alone. Move onward, therefore, with a firmness which no obstacle shall shake, to the entire revolution and renewal of the inward nature; the increased illumination of the conscience, that great light of the mind; the sanctification of the desires, which embrace the whole propensive and "affectional" nature; and the subjection of the will, which is naturally so proud and rebellious, to the will of God.

## PART TWO

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### THE LIFE OF FAITH AND LOVE

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### REMARKS ON UNRESTRAINED AND INORDINATE DESIRES

If it is our purpose to devote ourselves to the Lord without reserve, it is important that we should look seriously and closely into the nature and degree of our desires. It is true, desires are an essential part of our nature. As natural principles, such as the desire of life, the desire of food, the desire of knowledge, the desire of society, they have their place, their laws, their uses. But the difficulty is, that in the natural man, and also in the partially sanctified man, they are not adequately superintended and controlled by the principle of divine love. They multiply themselves beyond due limits; they are often self-interested, inordinate, and evil; so much so as sometimes to bring the whole man into subjection. Desires thus inordinate and selfish, which are characterized, among other things, by the fatal traits of inward agitation and restlessness, cannot be too much guarded against.

1. In support of the remark which has just been made, we proceed to observe, in the first place, that unrestrained desires always imply guilt. The man whose desires are unrestrained, is a man that chooses to have his own way; lives his own life; operates upon his own stock; and, in a word, claims to be a god in his own right. It is obvious that, under a divine government, there can be no virtue without subordination. The moment, therefore, that the desire, which is inherent in any creature, gets the

ascendency, and violates the law of obedience to the Supreme Ruler, that moment he is no longer the same being; but has undergone a change, as fatal as it is sudden, from truth to falsehood, and from honor to guilt. How important is it, then, that the natural desires should be checked and subdued; and that they should be subdued to that point where they shall be practically lost in the one pre-eminent and gracious desire of knowing and doing the will of God!

2. We should guard against irregular desires, not only because they imply guilt, but because they tend to render one miserable. The laws of the mind are such that irregular and inordinate desires can never be fully and permanently gratified. If they meet with a present gratification, they always lay the foundation for their own re-existence in the shape of subsequent and still stronger desires, which will fail to be gratified. A mind which is under the dominion of such urgent but ungratified desires can never be at rest—can never be happy. It is inwardly goaded onward, without the possibility of consolation and peace.

And it is in this manner that Satan, impelled by desires which aim at supreme dominion, without the possibility of ever being satisfied, is consumed inwardly and forever by a flame that can never be extinguished. This, it is true, is not the only source of his misery; but it is a principal one. Desires, therefore, conform, in this respect, to the universal law, viz., that guilt always brings misery. Have we not, then, sufficient reason for saying that all irregular and inordinate desires should be especially guarded against?

3. We remark, again, that all irregular and unsanctified desires stand directly in the way of the operations of the Spirit of God upon the soul; the obstacle they present being in proportion to the strength of the desire. God,



in the person of the Holy Ghost, would immediately set up His dominion in all hearts, were it not for the obstacle presented by desires. God loves His creatures; and He wants nothing of us but that we should remove the obstacles which shut Him out of our hearts. It is self-evident that desires and purposes of our own, in distinction from God's desires and purposes—inasmuch as they are not in the position of obedience, and are not in the line of God's inward movements—are incompatible with His dominion in the soul.

If, therefore, we would be without guilt and misery, if we would enjoy renovation and liberty of spirit, and would have God enthroned in our hearts as our king and sovereign, we must cease from desires; that is to say, we must cease from natural or unsanctified desires. We must desire nothing, on the one hand, out of the will of God; and must refuse nothing, on the other, that happens to us in conformity to His will. And it is thus, and thus only, that God can become to us an indwelling and paramount principle of life and action—our All in All.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ON THE PROPER REGULATION OF THE APPETITES

In connection with the views which have been presented in the preceding chapter, it is to be remembered that the leading appetites and propensities, in their specific forms, are but so many modifications of desire; and if it is acknowledged to be important that the desires should be properly regulated, it is equally important that the specific appetites and propensities into which desire, under the appropriate circumstances, modifies itself, should be subjected to a similar regulation. And the same general remark will apply to the affections also, as well as to the appetites and the propensive principles; inasmuch as the affections are known to be characterized by desire, as an essential and leading element, and are susceptible of an inordinate action.

1. In the few observations which we propose to make on the subject of the appetites, at the present time, our first remark is this: The appetites are good in their appropriate place; but when they are not properly regulated, by being restricted to their appropriate occasions and objects, they are the source of great evil. I believe it is generally admitted that the undue indulgence of the appetites—the “lower passions,” as they are sometimes denominated—is the true source of inward impurity; a state of mind which, it is to be feared, most persons know by melancholy experience better than it can be illustrated by any description. Men speak of them, whenever they operate out of their appropriate sphere and degree, as low, degrading, and polluting; and compare those, who thus indulge in them, with the swine that wallow in the mire.

There is also something in one's consciousness which supports this view. When the appetites are entirely subdued, and kept in their place, the subject of them—at least so far as the appetites are concerned—feels that he is pure in heart. But when it is otherwise, there is a sense, not only of guilt, but of *degradation*; there is a consciousness of what may be termed, metaphorically, a stain or blot upon the mind. The soul feels itself, in the experience of its own state, to be very different from what it is at other times. The holy soul may be likened to a mirror into which God may look and behold the features of His own character reflected. But when it yields itself to the undue influence of the appetites, the mirror becomes stained and darkened, and God is no longer seen in it.

2. In accordance with these views, a person may become impure—as, in point of fact, many do become impure—by the inordinate indulgence of the appetite for food and drink. The Saviour ate and drank without prejudice to His holiness, because He did so in fulfillment of the laws of nature. The truly devoted followers of the Saviour will endeavor to imitate His example in this respect. "I felt no disposition," says the pious Brainerd, "to eat and drink for the sake of the pleasure of it; but only to support my nature, and to fit me for divine service."

Happy would it be, if such views and practices more generally prevailed. But it is a painful truth that multitudes of persons, and some even of those who claim to be the Saviour's followers, pollute themselves by taking food, not for the sake of the food, and in the fulfillment of the intentions of nature, but for the sake of the pleasure which it gives—making the pleasure the ultimate, and oftentimes the sole object. In other words, they eat and drink for their lust's sake. They do not eat and drink because it is necessary to support nature—an important

object, which, when properly kept in view, has a tendency to limit the quality and quantity of the articles taken—but in order that they may gratify their selfish propensities. Such are the persons that are properly denominated *impure*; and they feel themselves to be so. The superabundance of the flesh, nourished by meats and drinks stimulating in their nature, and inordinate in quantity, seems to spread a coat of its dark and unseemly accretion over the mind itself. The amount of impurity which results from this source is immense, and will abundantly account for the lamentations of many persons over their spiritual leanness.

3. One of the principles, coming under the denomination of the appetites, is that which results from the relation of the sexes. A serious mind—certainly one that is disposed to recognize the benevolent hand of God in all His works—will not be inclined to speak in terms of disparagement of this appetite, which, in an important sense, is the foundation of the family state. But sin, which has spread its poison everywhere, has converted that which was designed for good, and nothing but good, into a source of evil. Every desire, founded upon the relation of the sexes, which is not in accordance with the providence and the will of God, leaves a stain upon the mind's purity, and is at war with holiness. But it is necessary merely to allude to the dangers from this source. The holy mind, which appreciates the importance of watchfulness in every direction, will not be inattentive to the perplexities and hazards which exist here. A single emotion, at variance with entire purity of heart, is inconsistent, so long as it exists, with communion with God, and with His favor.

4. We leave this subject with one or two observations more. In connection with what has been remarked, we are naturally led to urge upon all persons, who wish

to live a life of true holiness, the greater importance of living than is generally supposed. If Christians, instead of indulging and pampering the appetite for meats and drinks, would be satisfied with simple nourishment, and with that small quantity which is adequate to all the purposes of nature, what abundant blessings would infallibly result both to body and mind! Many dark hours, which are now the subject of sad complaints, on the part of professed Christians, would be exchanged for bright ones. God would then reveal His face of affectionate love, which it is impossible for Him to do to those who enslave themselves in this manner. And in relation to any other principles, which properly come under the head of the appetites—beneficial and important as they undoubtedly are in their place—if they could be restrained to the purposes and the limits which their Author has assigned, it would certainly make a vast difference in the relative amount of sin and holiness, of suffering and happiness, in the world.

### CHAPTER THREE

## ON THE NATURE AND REGULATION OF THE PROPENSIVE PRINCIPLES

There is another class of principles, which may be considered, for a number of reasons, as coming under the general head of desires; but which are obviously different, in some respects, from that modification of desire which bears the name of the appetites. These principles, which, in order to distinguish them from the appetites, are denominated the Propensities or Propensive Principles, seem to be less dependent for their existence and exercise upon the condition of the physical system than the appetites are. Removed, in some degree, from the outward senses, which are the basis of the action of the appetites, they obviously sustain a closer affinity to the higher and more important principles of our nature; and accordingly, in the general estimation which is attached to the different parts of our mental constitution, they are regarded as holding a higher rank. Some of the principles which come under this general head (for it is not necessary to go into a particular examination of them) are the principles of self-preservation or the desire for continued existence, curiosity or the desire for knowledge, sociality or the desire for society, self-love or the desire for happiness, the desire for esteem, and some others.

Religion can never be regarded as having taken up its abode in the heart, and as having become a permanent and paramount element of our inward being, without reaching these principles, and without checking their inordinate tendencies and bringing them back to the original measurement of a subordinate and holy action.

It is certainly not too much to say, that we are accountable to God, strictly and fully accountable, for the exercise of the social feelings, for the exercise of the principle of curiosity or the desire for knowledge, and of other propulsive principles, as well as for the indulgence of the appetites, or the exercise of any other inward act or tendency of which we are susceptible. And accordingly, it cannot properly be said, in the full sense of the terms, that we live in Christ or that "Christ liveth in us" while any of these principles retain an unsanctified influence. They do not require to be destroyed; but it is obvious that they must be made holy.

It will be perceived that these views are not entirely accordant with the sentiments which have sometimes been entertained by individuals and even by large bodies of Christians. Many pious persons, at different periods in the history of the church, have maintained that the various propensities and affections should not merely be crucified in the true scriptural sense, viz., by being reduced from an irregular to a subordinate and holy action, but should be *exterminated*. In accordance with this opinion, obviously erroneous as it is, many persons of both sexes, some of them distinguished for their learning and their rank in life, have avoided, by a permanent principle of action, everything that could please the appetites or gratify the demands of our social nature. Influenced by mistaken notions of what Christianity really requires, they have literally made their abode in the dens and caves of the earth; and may be said, with too much foundation in fact, to have rejected the society of man for the companionship of wild beasts.

There is some reason to think that many of the class of persons, to whom we have reference in these remarks, placed more reliance on works than on faith. This was a great error, though a candid consideration of their lives

will probably justify us in regarding it as an unintentional one. The mighty efficacy of faith, in its relation to the renovation of the human mind, seems not to have been well understood by them. And being left destitute, in a considerable degree, of the aids and consolations which so abundantly flow from that source, they pressed the principle of consecration, which independently of faith becomes the imperfect and unsatisfactory principle of mere works, to its extreme limits. They deprived themselves of the necessary sleep; wore garments that inflicted constant suffering; mingled ashes with their bread; and submitted to other acts and observances of a penitential nature, either to render themselves, in their present characters, more acceptable to God, or to propitiate the divine mercy for the commission of past sins.

With feelings of entire sympathy with the sincerity which has characterized the conduct of many humble and suffering recluses, we still feel bound to say that we do not understand the Scriptures as requiring the crucifixion of the appetites and propensities to be carried to this extent. The Scriptures require us to become Christians; but they do not require us to cease to be men. They require us to put off the "old man," which is untrue, a perversion of good, and a "liar from the beginning"; but they do not, and could not, require us to put off the "new man," which is the same, if not physically and intellectually, yet in all the attributes of the heart, with the primitive or holy man, the man as he existed in Adam before his fall, and as he became re-existent in the stainless Saviour. But Christ, who is set before us as our example, ate and drank without sin; he recognized and discharged the duty of social intercourse without sin; and he performed the various other duties, which are appropriate to human nature, in equal freedom from anything that is wrong and unholy.



And we may make a single remark here which may tend to relieve the minds of some in relation to this subject, viz., that it is a more difficult thing, and requires more reflection and more religious principle, to regulate the appetites and propensities than it does to destroy them. And while the work of a holy regulation is to be regarded as a more difficult work than that of destruction, we may add, that it is undoubtedly more acceptable to God, although it is probably less calculated to attract notice and to secure celebrity. God expects us to do what He requires us to do; and to attempt to do more, or do otherwise, than He requires, can result only from a mistaken judgment or from perverse intentions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### REMARKS ON INTERIOR TRIALS AND DESOLATIONS

It is perhaps a common opinion, that those who are greatly advanced in religion, and have experienced what may properly be regarded as the grace of present sanctification, are not very much tried and afflicted. They are supposed to possess not only an inheritance of constant peace, but of much joy.

That a truly sanctified person is never in darkness, in one sense of the term, viz., condemnatory darkness—in other words, that he never loses the grace of a confiding trust in God and of solid internal peace, which his Saviour has given to him as his inheritance—is undoubtedly true. If there ever be an exception—as, for instance, when the mental powers are depressed and darkened by the pressure of some physical disease—yet such exceptions are probably few in number, are explainable on principles peculiar to themselves, and are not to be regarded as essentially affecting the general doctrine.

But although those who are wholly devoted to God may be said always to have a solid and permanent peace, it is not true that they are exempt from heavy afflictions, both external and internal. On the contrary, there is some reason to believe, that those who love most will suffer most; that those who are the strongest in the Lord will have the heaviest burden to bear. "In the world," says the Saviour, "ye shall have tribulation." "For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ," says the apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, "not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." It is important to

understand this, to know that it is our lot and our privilege to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, so that those who enter into the way of holy living—which is just what it is described to be, viz., a *narrow way*—may not be discouraged and overcome in the season of heavy trial. Satan will say to them, at such times, "Where now is your God?" And it is exceedingly desirable that they should know how to answer him.

1. It is reasonable to suppose that a holy soul, one that has experienced the richness of sanctifying grace, will oftentimes be much afflicted in consequence of not finding in others a spirit corresponding to its own. In the present state of the world, when practical holiness is but partially understood and still less realized, such a soul, although the social principle remains strong in it, is necessarily solitary to a considerable degree. How can it enter with spirit and eagerness into worldly conversation? How can it participate, with any degree of relish, in vain, worldly amusements and pleasures? Such souls are sometimes borne down with the desire of imparting to others the spiritual tidings which God has inwardly communicated to them. But they find few, and perhaps none, that are ready and willing to hear them. And thus they sit alone in secret places, and shed in silence the solitary tear.

2. They are afflicted in view of the condition of the church. With all disposition to be grateful for what amount of piety there is, and also to make all due allowance for the deficiencies that exist, they perceive, and cannot help perceiving, that the church is, to a considerable extent, in bondage. They see very distinctly that she lives far below her duties and privileges—those duties and privileges to which her God calls her. It is their sympathy with the Divine Mind, as well as their sorrow for the church, which affects them. How can they possibly be

without grief, in view of the insulted honor and the disregarded beneficence of the God whom they love? And if this were possible—as it certainly cannot be—how is it possible for them to refrain from weeping when the church for whom their bleeding Saviour has purchased garments of light voluntarily walks in sordid and defiled habiliments?

3. They have feelings of deep compassion and sorrow for sinners, which others have not. We would not assert that these feelings are always stronger than those of other persons; but they appear to be more deeply rooted in the mind, more thoroughly based upon principle, and more permanent and unchangeable. In view of the situation of sinners, they may even be said to have continual heaviness; not a heaviness which is periodical, which goes and comes with a change of circumstances, but is, at least in a modified sense of the term, continual. There is this peculiarity, however, that their sorrow, however deep it may be, is always calm. While they think much of sinners, they think more of God. And they know that God will be glorified, though sinners are destroyed. This consideration imparts a tranquility of mind, which may sometimes be supposed to originate in absence of feeling. This calm, deep-rooted sorrow, in view of the danger of sinners and of the dishonor which they put upon God, although, in accordance with the laws of the human mind, it has its alternations with other feelings, and is subject to occasional variations, may yet be said, with a high degree of truth, to be always with them. It is in this respect peculiarly that they may be said to sympathize with the blessed Saviour in bearing the burden of the cross; since there can be no doubt that it was on account of others, far more than His own, that He was afflicted in the world, was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

4. But this is not all. God sometimes sees fit to impose upon these, His beloved children, internal as well as external crosses. There seems to be almost a necessity for this. The life which they now live, they live by faith in the Son of God. The Christian life is truly and emphatically a life of faith. A life of faith is necessarily the opposite of a life of direct vision. And how can the principle of faith operate, much more how can it acquire strength, unless God shall at times withdraw himself from the direct vision and leave the soul to its own obscurity? If a man, wishing to test the spirit of obedience in his son, commands the son to follow him in a certain direction, does he not render his own test unavailable, by taking him by the hand and dragging him along? And so our heavenly Father, if He wishes to test and strengthen our faith, must He not sometimes take us out of the region of openness and clearness of sight, and place us in the midst of entanglements, uncertainties, and shadows? What we need, what we must have, what is absolutely indispensable to our interior salvation, is faith; faith which gives the victory; faith strong, unwavering, adamant. It was by want of faith that we fell; it is by want of faith that we are kept in continual bondage; and it is only by the restoration of faith that we can sunder the chains that shackle us, and walk forth in spiritual freedom. But faith can never arise to that degree of invigoration, which our necessities so imperiously demand, while we are permitted to walk continually in the field of open vision and under the sunlight of present manifestations. Hence there seems to be a necessity, that He who has made us, and who loves us with an infinity of love, should, nevertheless, sometimes wrap himself in the majesty of uncertain darkness, in order that we may learn the great lesson of following God without seeing Him, and of appreciating His

uttered word, His simple declaration, at the same value with His manifested realities and acts.

It is here, then, that we find the secret reason, that God sees fit to leave to interior desolations and sorrows those who are truly His sanctified people. Hence it is that He not only shows us the vanities of the world and the desolations of the church, the present and prospective wretchedness of impenitent sinners—a burden, without anything else to enhance it, which is heavy to be borne—but He also withdraws at times the light of present manifestations; He withholds the comfort of inward sensible joys; He leaves the understanding, and even at times the affections, in a painful state of comparative inertness and aridity; He permits Satan, in addition to these fearful evils, to assail us with his fiery darts, injecting into the intellect a multitude of unholy thoughts, and besieging us continually with sharp and varied temptations. But there still remains the blessed privilege of believing. We can still say, "Our expectation is from the Lord." We still have the privilege of declaring, even in the deep dejection and brokenness of our hearts, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ON THE TRUE IDEA OF SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

It has probably come within the observation of many persons, that there is a form or modification of religious experience, which is denominated "liberty." Hence, in common religious parlance, it is not unfrequently the case that we hear of persons being "in the liberty," or in the "true liberty." These expressions undoubtedly indicate an important religious truth, which has not altogether escaped the notice of writers on the religious life. The account which is given by Francis de Sales of "liberty of spirit" is, that "*it consists in keeping the heart totally disengaged from every created thing, in order that it may follow the known will of God.*"

1. The person who is in the enjoyment of true spiritual liberty is no longer intralld to the lower or appetitive part of his nature. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever other appetite may claim its appropriate exercise, he can say in truth that he does all to the glory of God. It is to be lamented—but is, nevertheless, true—that there are many persons of a reputable Christian standing, who are subject, in a greater or less degree, to a very injurious tyranny from this source. But this is not the case with those who are in the possession of inward liberty. Their souls have entered into the pleasures of divine rest; and they can truly say they are dead to appetites, except so far as they operate to fulfill the original and wise intentions of the Being who implanted them.

2. The person who is in the enjoyment of true spiritual liberty is no longer intralld by certain desires of a higher character than the appetites—such as the desire for society, the desire for knowledge, the desire for the world's esteem, and the like. These principles, which, in

order to distinguish them from the appetites, may conveniently be designated as the propensities, or propensive principles, operate in the man of true inward liberty as they were designed to operate, but never with the power to enslave. He desires, for instance, to go into society, and, in compliance with the suggestions of the social principles, to spend a portion of time in social intercourse; but he finds it entirely easy, although the desire, in itself considered, may be somewhat marked and strong, to keep it in strict subordination to his great purpose of doing everything for the glory of God. Or, perhaps, under the influence of another propensive tendency—that of the principle of curiosity—he desires to read a book of much interest, which some individual has placed before him; but he finds it entirely within his power, as in the other case, to check his desires, and to keep it in its proper place. In neither of these instances, nor in others like them, is he borne down; as soon as it begins to exist, it is at once brought to the true test. The question at once arises, Is the desire of spending my time in this way conformable to the will of God? And if it is found, or suspected, to be at variance with the divine will, it is dismissed at once. The mind is conscious of an inward strength, which enables it to set at defiance all enslaving tendencies of this nature.

3. A man who is in the enjoyment of true religious liberty will not be intralled by inordinate domestic or patriotic affections, however ennobling they may be thought to be—such as the love of parents and children, the love of friends and country. It is true that spiritual liberty does not exclude the exercise of these affections—which are, in many respects, generous and elevated—any more than it condemns and excludes the existence and exercise of the lower appetites and propensities. It pronounces its condemnation and exclusion upon a certain



degree of them, or a certain intensity of power. When they are so strong as to become perplexities and entanglements in the path of duty, then they are evidently inconsistent with the existence of true spiritual freedom, and in that shape, and in that degree, necessarily come under condemnation.

4. When we are wrongly under the influence of disinclinations and aversions, we cannot be said to be in internal liberty. Sometimes, when God very obviously calls us to the discharge of duty, we are internally conscious of a great degree of backwardness. We do it, it is true; but we feel that we do not like to do it. There are certain duties which we owe to the poor and degraded, to the openly profane and impure, which are oftentimes repugnant to persons of certain refined mental habits; but if we find that these refined repugnances, which come in the way of duty, have great power over us, we are not in the true liberty. We have not that strength in God which enables us to act vigorously and freely. Sometimes we have an aversion to an individual, the origin of which we cannot easily account for; there is something unpleasant to us, and perhaps unreasonably so, in his countenance, his manners, or his person. If this aversion interferes with, and prevents, the prompt and full discharge of the duty which, as a friend and a Christian, we owe to him, then we have reason to think that we have not reached that state of holy and unrestrained flexibility of mind which the true idea of spiritual liberty implies.

5. The person is not in the enjoyment of true liberty of spirit, who is wanting in the disposition of accommodation to others in things which are not of especial importance. And this is the case when we needlessly insist upon having everything done in our own time and manner; when we are troubled about little things, which are in themselves indifferent, and think perhaps, more of the

position of a chair than of the salvation of a soul; when we find a difficulty in making allowance for the constitutional difference in others, which it may not be either easy or important for them to correct; when we find ourselves disgusted because another does not express himself in entire accordance with our principles of taste; or when we are displeased and dissatisfied with his religious, or other performances, although we know he does the best he can. All these things, and many others like them, give evidence of a mind that has not entered into the broad and untrammelled domain of spiritual freedom.

We may properly add here, that the fault-finder—especially one who is in the confirmed habit of fault-finding—is not a man of a free spirit. Accordingly, those who are often complaining of their minister, of the brethren of the church, of the time and manner of the ordinances, and of many other persons and things, will find, on a careful examination, that they are too full of self, too strongly moved by their personal views and interests, to know the true and full import of that ennobling liberty which the Saviour gives to His truly sanctified ones.

6. The person who is disturbed and impatient when events fall out differently from what he expected and anticipated is not in the enjoyment of true spiritual freedom. In accordance with the great idea of God's perfect sovereignty, the man of a religiously free spirit regards all events which take place—*sin only excepted*—as an expression, under the existing circumstances, of the will of God. And such is his unity with the divine will that there is an immediate acquiescence in the event, whatever may be its nature, and however afflicting in its personal bearings. His mind has acquired, as it were, a divine flexibility, in virtue of which it accommodates itself, with surprising ease and readiness, to all the developments of providence, whether prosperous or adverse.

7. Those who are in the enjoyment of true liberty are patient under interior temptations, and all inward trials of mind. They can bless the hand that smites them internally as well as externally. Knowing that all good exercises are from the Holy Spirit, they have no disposition to prescribe to God what the particular nature of those exercises shall be. If God sees fit to try, and to strengthen, their spirit of submission and patience by bringing them into a state of great heaviness and sorrow, either by subjecting them to severe temptations from the adversary of souls, or by laying upon them the burden of deep grief for an impenitent world, or in any other way, they feel it to be all right and well. They ask for their daily bread spiritually, as well as temporally; and they cheerfully receive what God sees fit to send them.

8. The person who enjoys true liberty of spirit is the most deliberate and cautious in doing what he is most desirous to do. This arises from the fact that he is very much afraid of being out of the line of God's will and order. He distrusts, and examines closely, all strong desires and strong feelings generally, especially if they agitate his mind and render it somewhat uncontrollable; not merely nor chiefly because the feelings are strong; that is not the reason; but because there is reason to fear, from the very fact of their strength and agitating tendency, that some of nature's fire, which true sanctification quenches and destroys, has mingled in with the holy and peaceable flame of divine love. John the Baptist, no doubt, had a strong natural desire to be near Jesus Christ while He was here on earth, to hear His divine words, to enjoy personally His company; but in the ennobling liberty of spirit which the Holy Ghost gave him, he was enabled to overrule and suppress this desire, and to remain alone in the solitary places of the wilderness.

9. He who is in true liberty of spirit is not easily excited by opposition. The power of grace gives him inward strength; and it is the nature of true strength to be deliberate. Accordingly, when his views are controverted, he is not hasty to reply. He is not indifferent; but he replies calmly and thoughtfully. He has confidence in the truth, because he has confidence in God. "God is true"; and being what He is, God can have no fellowship with that which is the opposite of truth. He knows that, if his own sentiments are not correct, they will pass away in due time, because everything which is false necessarily carries in itself the element of its own destruction. He knows, too, that if the sentiments of his adversaries are false, they bear no stamp of durability. God is arrayed against them, and they must sooner or later fall. Hence it is, that his strong faith in God, and in the truth of which God is the protector, kills the eagerness of nature. He is calm amid opposition; patient under rebuke.

10. The person of a truly liberated spirit, although he is ever ready to do his duty, waits patiently till the proper time of action. He has no choice of time but that which is indicated by the providence of God. The Saviour himself could not act until His "hour came." When He was young, He was subject to His parents; when He was older, He taught in the synagogues. In His journeyings, in His miracles, in His instructions, in His sufferings, He always had an acquiescent and approving reference to that providential order of events which His heavenly Father had established. On the contrary, an intralled mind, although it is religiously disposed in part, will frequently adopt a precipitate and undeliberate course of action, which is inconsistent with the humble love of the divine order. Such a person thinks that freedom consists in having things in his own way, whereas true freedom consists in having things in the right way; and the right way

is God's way. And in this remark we include not only the thing to be done, and the manner of doing it, but also the time of doing it.

11. The possessor of true religious liberty, when he has submissively and conscientiously done his duty, is not troubled by any undue anxiety in relation to the result. It may be laid down as a maxim, that he who asserts that he has left all things in the hands of God, and at the same time exhibits trouble and agitation of spirit in relation to the results of those very things (with the exception of those agitated movements or disquietudes which are purely *instinctive*) gives abundant evidence, in the fact of this agitation of spirit, that he has not really made the entire surrender which he professes to have made. The alleged facts are contradictory of each other, and both cannot exist at the same time.

12. *Finally*, in view of what has been said, and as a sort of summary of the whole, we may remark that true liberty of spirit is found in those, and in those only, who, in the language of De Sales, "keep the heart totally disengaged from every created thing, in order that they may follow the known will of God." In other words, it is found with those who can say, with the apostle Paul, that they are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." The ruling motive in the breast of the man of a religiously free spirit is that he may, in all cases and on all occasions, do the will of God. In that will his "life is hid." The supremacy of the divine will—in other words, the reign of God in the heart—necessarily has a direct and powerful operation upon the appetites, propensities, and affections; keeping them, each and all, in their proper place. As God rules in the heart, everything else is necessarily subordinate. It is said of the Saviour himself that "He pleased not himself," but that He came "to do His Father's will."

## PART THREE

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### ON INWARD DIVINE GUIDANCE

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### SUGGESTIONS TO AID IN SECURING THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

One of the most important questions which can occupy the minds of those who wish to experience the reality of the interior spiritual life is, "In what manner can we most certainly secure the ever-present and guiding influence of the Holy Spirit?" We learn from the Scriptures that those are "foolish prophets that follow their *own spirit*." The facts of individual experience, in relation to the subject of a divine guidance, abundantly confirm the truth of the scriptural declarations. "Though this secret direction of the Almighty," says Sir Matthew Hale, who was distinguished as a Christian as well as a scholar and a judge, "is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul; yet even in the concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God, and begging His direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call my own experience to witness, that even in the temporal affairs of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best direction when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored it." And I think we may undoubtedly regard it as a great truth, ever to be kept in remembrance, that the true children of God, so far as they live acceptably to Him, are guided by the Spirit of God. This great truth, that, as followers of God, it is our privilege and duty to be led by the Spirit of God, may be realized continually in our per-

sonal experience, as it seems to us, in connection with a few simple but fundamental conditions.

1. In the first place, we cannot reasonably expect to be guided by the spirit, unless we desire it. And if we expect a continuance of this guidance, the desire must be permanent and strong. It would be extremely absurd to suppose that the Holy Spirit will condescend to dwell with us, if we have no desire for it, or if we have not a permanent and strong desire. But we cannot suppose that those who seek after holiness of heart are without this desire; and therefore we do not consider it necessary to dwell upon this point.

2. In order to realize this great blessing, we must have faith in God that He will do for us the thing which we ask. To desire of God without having faith in the Giver, is nearly as effectual a way to defeat the object of our request as to be without desire. But on this point also we will not delay. Who can be ignorant that one of the first elements in the life of holiness is the doctrine of faith? "Without faith it is impossible to please God." How can it be possible, then, without faith, to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit?

3. Besides those which have been mentioned, there is another condition necessary to be realized, in order to have the guiding influences of the Holy Spirit always with us, namely, we must cease from our natural activity. We do not mean to say that we must be inactive, but that we must cease from the activity of *nature*. In other words, ceasing from self and from its turbulent and deceitful elements, and, as a consequence of this, ceasing to place ourselves and our personal interests foremost, we must keep our own plans, purposes, and aims in entire subjection. For instance, when we ask God to guide us, we must not at the same time cherish in our hearts a secret determination and hope to *guide ourselves*; just as some

persons foolishly, and almost wickedly, ask the advice of their neighbors, when they have already fully decided in their own minds upon their future course of action. If we would have our desires of being continually guided by the Holy Spirit fully realized, we must not only give up our personal and self-interested plans and purposes, submitting everything into God's hands with entire childlike simplicity, but it is important also not to give way to uneasy, agitated, and excited feelings. The existence of undue eagerness and excitement of spirit is an evidence that we are, in some degree, afraid to trust God, and that we are still too much under the influence of the life of nature; so that to cease from the activity of nature, when properly understood, seems to be nothing more nor less than to cease from the spirit of self-wisdom, self-seeking, and self-guidance, and thus to remain in submissive and peaceful simplicity and disengagement of spirit, in order that God may enter in and may guide us by the wisdom of His own divine inspiration.

It may be proper to add here that the view which has now been expressed is entirely consistent with the exercise of our powers of perception and reflection. A cessation from our natural activity, in the sense which has been explained, is not only consistent with, but it is evidently favorable to, a just exercise of these powers. They will be found at such times to be free from erroneous and disturbing influences, and to possess a clearer insight into the truth.

4. In order to secure the continual presence of the Holy Spirit, we must not only fulfill the condition of ceasing from the self-interested activity of nature, we must not only believe in God's truth and faithfulness to His promises, not only attend with a sincere desire for the blessing under consideration, but when we ask under such circumstances, it is our privilege and duty to believe



that we now have the thing for which we ask. If, for instance, in true detachment and simplicity of spirit, and with a sincere desire for the object, we seek the divine wisdom, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, to guide us in some difficult case of duty, we are bound, on the principles of Scripture, to believe (provided, further, that we exercise all our powers of perception and reasoning applicable to the case) that we do now have all that wisdom which God sees to be necessary for us. Accordingly, we are not at liberty, in the spirit of distrust toward God, to go about to seek some new natural light with which to see our spiritual wisdom. Such wisdom, resting, in its origin, upon the immutable promise of God—a promise which is fulfilled in connection with the exercise of faith—is, for the most part, hidden from all forms of sight on the part of the creature, except one. That is to say, as it has its origin in connection with the operations of faith, and cannot exist except in that connection, so it is visible, in general, *only to the eye of faith*. It seems very evident, under the circumstances, and in the fulfillment of the conditions which have been mentioned, that we should do wrong, we should sin against God, not to believe in the actual possession of the thing which had been interceded for. It would evidently be a case of *unbelief*; and unbelief can never be accounted otherwise than a great sin. It is in accordance with this view, that we find the following expression in the First Epistle of John (5: 14, 15): “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.*”

In conclusion, we would remark, that in yielding ourselves up to the divine direction under such circumstances as have been mentioned, we not only have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but I think we are not exposed to those

illusions and mistakes which might otherwise be likely to befall us. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say, that we may be sure of being kept in the right path at such times. The state of mind which we have described is not only one of earnest desire and strong faith, but, as it seems to us, of true *meekness*. And we are told in the Scriptures, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalms 25:9). It is the opinion of Fenelon, who seems to have had a personal experience of the divine operation deeply interior, that in the moments of mental quietness and of recollection in God—in other words, when we look to God in a state of cessation from our natural activity—we should not hesitate to follow the interior impulses and attractions of the soul; meaning to be understood, undoubtedly, that if we believingly ask for divine guidance in such a state of mind, the attraction or tendency of the soul, which then exists, cannot be safely ascribed to anything but the Spirit of God; and that, consequently, we may consider ourselves under a divine, and not under a mere human direction. This we believe to be true. Nevertheless, in this case, as in all others, we should never yield to the guidance of any interior attraction, however it may have the *appearance* of originating with the Holy Spirit, which at the same time we know to be at variance with the written Word of God. God can never contradict himself; and whatever revelation He has made of himself in His holy Word we must regard as authentic, and as entitled to our supreme confidence. But with the limitation implied in this remark, we have no doubt that God, operating upon the mind in a divine manner, will certainly teach and guide those who, in renouncing the self-interested eagerness of nature, possess true meekness and quietness of spirit, and who believingly and earnestly look to Him for such teaching and direction.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMPULSES AND A SANCTIFIED JUDGMENT

It is sometimes the case that persons act from certain interior impressions which may properly be termed *impulses*. It would certainly be very injurious to the cause of holiness, if the doctrine should prevail that mere interior impressions or impulses may of themselves become the rule of conduct to a holy person. That persons in sanctification are under a divine guidance, and that they cannot retain the grace of sanctification without such guidance, is entirely true. But it has sometimes been the case, that men have mistaken natural impulses for the secret inspirations of the Spirit, and, in the flattering belief of being guided by a higher power, have experienced no other guidance than that of their own rebellious passions. On the danger of such a state, of which the church has seen too many melancholic instances, it is unnecessary to remark. We proceed, therefore, to lay down some principles, which, if we do not err in our statement of them, will be of some assistance in guiding us in relation to this practical and important subject.

1. The Holy Spirit is very various in His operations upon men; but it will be conceded, I suppose, as a correct principle, that He generally conforms himself in His operations, whatever they may be, to the structure and laws of the human mind. Accordingly, in those operations—the object of which is to guide or direct men—it will be found that He always acts in connection with the powers which are appropriate to such a result; and particularly in connection with the perceptive and judging powers. We

desire it to be kept in mind, that we are speaking here of His directing or guiding operations; in other words, those which have a special connection with human conduct. These are the operations which most intimately concern us, and in regard to which it is most important to establish correct principles. We proceed to say, therefore, it is very obvious from man's mental structure, although he is sometimes the subject of a purely instinctive movement, that God designed that the perceptive and judging powers which He has given us should ordinarily furnish the fundamental condition or basis of human action. And if in His spiritual providences it should be found to be His practice to guide men in any way not in accordance with this design, He would be inconsistent with himself. The first principle, therefore, which we lay down, is—that the Holy Spirit guides men by operating in connection with the perceptive and judging powers.

And we may properly remark here, that this view, which is so important as to be deserving of the reflection of the most judicious persons, seems to be in accordance with the sentiments of the pious and learned John Howe. "We cannot," says this esteemed writer, "so much as apprehend clearly and with distinction the things which are needful for us to apprehend, *without the light of the Spirit of wisdom*. It is necessary (*viz.*, the light which the Spirit of wisdom gives) to the act of distinguishing or discerning between things, what is to be done and what is not to be done. There is a continual need, through the whole course of our spiritual life, for the using of such a discretive judgment between things and things. And in reference hereto, there needs to be a continual emanation of the Holy Ghost, for otherwise we put good for evil and evil for good, light for darkness and darkness for light. We need the Spirit's help, to shine with vigorous and

powerful light into our minds, so as to bring our judgments to a right determination."

2. We may lay it down as another principle, that the Holy Spirit does not, either by His gentle influences, or by those which are more sudden and powerful, so operate upon a person as to guide him into any course which is truly irrational and absurd. Now, we know, in many cases, if we should yield to the direction of mere impressions and impulses, especially those which are of a powerful kind, we should be led to do those things, which, to whatever test or measurement they might be subjected, could not escape the denomination of irrationality or absurdity. Of such impulses the Holy Spirit can never be the author, because nothing which is really absurd and irrational (we speak not of the mere *appearance*, but of the reality of absurdity) can come from that source. I recollect once to have read the account of a person, published by himself, in which he gives the reader to understand, that on a certain occasion he was suddenly and violently seized by the power of God, as he expresses it—an expression undoubtedly synonymous, in the view of the writer, with the power of the Holy Ghost—and he was raised up by this divine impulse from the chest on which he was sitting, and was "whirled swiftly round, like a top, for the space of two hours, without the least pain or inconvenience." We do not see on what grounds such an extraordinary result as this, so unmeaning, so unprofitable and absurd, can properly be ascribed to the power of God or the power of the Holy Ghost; especially if it be susceptible of explanation, as we think it can be, in a considerable degree at least, on any natural principles. We know that the Saviour was full of the Holy Ghost; but we do not read of His being subjected to any operation of this kind. We know, also, that the apostles, although they were plentifully endowed with the Divine Spirit, and under His

teachings wrought various wonderful works, yet were never at any time made the subjects of such irrationalities. We have here, therefore, a mark of distinction, viz., that various irrational and absurd results may flow from natural impressions and impulses, but can never flow from the true operations of the Holy Spirit.

3. Actions which proceed from pure impulses, or a mere internal impression, without attendant perception or reflection, cannot possibly be holy actions. What we mean to say is, that there is a natural impossibility of their being such. A mere impulse, unattended by perception and reflection, is of the nature of an instinct; and any action, done from mere blind impulse, no matter how strong or extraordinary that impulse may be, is both physically and morally of the nature of an instinctive action. Now, as it is universally conceded that purely instinctive actions have no moral character, it is entirely evident that impulsive actions, which are of the same nature with instinctive actions, have no title to the denomination or character of holiness. Some persons seem to think that the more they act from impulse, especially powerful impulse, the more holy they are. But this, if we are correct in what has been said, is a great and dangerous mistake.

4. That the Holy Spirit does sometimes act directly upon the sensibilities by exciting in them a purely impulsive feeling, we may probably admit. Undoubtedly there are some facts in the experience of pious men which favor this view. But is it the object of the Holy Spirit, in originating impulsive impressions, to excite men to immediate action without any reflection, or to excite them to action rationally, that is to say, in connection with suitable inquiry and consideration? This is the important question; and the decision of it involves great practical results. It is certainly reasonable to suppose that it is not

the object of the Holy Spirit, when He makes a direct impulsive impression on the human mind, to lead men to act without perception and reflection; but rather to stop them in their thoughtless and unreflecting career, and to awaken within them the slumbering powers of thought and inquiry. It is reasonable to suppose this, because, as a wise being, as a being acting in accordance with the laws of the human mind, as a being infinitely desirous of true holiness in men, we do not well perceive how He can take any other course than this. The true tendency, therefore, of those impressions or impulses which come from the Spirit of God, is to awaken men to a sense of their thoughtlessness, and to quicken within them a state of humble and holy consideration. When such impressions and impulses are from the right source, we cannot doubt that the results will be of this character—that is to say, they will not of themselves lead men to direct action, but will lead them to that inquiry and reflection which are preparatory to action. But when impressions or impulses come from Satan, as they sometimes do, their tendency is to lead men to action at once, without such intermediate consideration.

5. Those impulses and impressions which are from the Spirit of God are of a peaceful and gentle character. They never agitate and disturb the mind, but, on the contrary, lay a wholesome restraint upon it and hold it in a state of deep solemnity and of attentive stillness. This is the precise state of things which is needed as preparatory to the mind's perceptive and reflective action. The first question of the soul, when it is thus arrested by the true impulses of the Holy Spirit, is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It pauses; it reflects; it inquires; it reads the Bible; it watches the providences of God; it prays; it asks for the assistance of the Holy Spirit upon its perceptions and reasonings; and it dares not take one step to the right

hand or to the left, until all its perceptive and reasoning powers have been exercised, and exercised, too, under the sanctifying guidance of the Holy Spirit. So that, although we may admit that there are sensitive impressions and impulses which are from the Holy Spirit, yet they are not of themselves, when they are really from that right and good source, guiding and controlling principles, but are merely preparatory to the action of such controlling principles, which are to be found in the intellective rather than the sensitive part. And such impressions are to be known by the decisive mark or characteristic which has now been given; viz., they are peaceable, holding the mind in a state of solemn and quiet attention. Perhaps a simple illustration will make our meaning more readily understood. A person is at a particular time peculiarly impressed that it is his duty to visit another person and converse with him on the subject of religion. If this impression is of divine origin, it will not violently agitate him; it will not lead him to action, whether rationally or irrationally; it will not necessarily and absolutely compel him to visit the person at once, and without any intermediate exercise of the mind. It will lead him, in the first instance, to reflect, to consider the suggested or impressed duty in various points of view, to mark the openings of God's providence, and to pray that, in his reflections and inquiries in respect to duty, he may be guided by the Holy Spirit. In a word, the impression which he has prompts him, in the first instance, merely to make prayerful inquiry; but in his further action he puts himself under the direction of a sanctified judgment; or, if the expression be preferred, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost operating through the medium of a sanctified judgment. In accordance with these views, we find the following passage in the writings of Antonia Bourignon: "If the Holy Spirit inspires any-



thing, He will always give time to consult upon it with God."

6. Impressions and impulses, which are not from the Holy Spirit, but from some other source, such as a disordered imagination, the world, or the devil, are not of that peaceful and quiet character which has been mentioned, but are hasty and violent. In violation of the great scriptural maxim, "*He that believeth shall not make haste,*" the person who is under this pernicious influence thinks he cannot be too quick. He makes but little account of obstacles; he cannot take time for interior examination; he has no open eye to God's outward providences; he is too impetuous, too much possessed by himself or by satanic influence to engage in calm and humble prayer for guidance; in a word, he rushes blindly onward just as his great adversary who is especially interested in his movements, would have him.

The great plea of these persons is, that the time is *now*, that what is to be done is to be done *now*, that the present moment is the true moment of action. This is essentially true; but there is a valuable remark of Fenelon, which places the doctrine of present or immediate action in its correct position. It is, that "*The present moment has a moral extension.*" In other words, we are undoubtedly bound to fulfill the duty of the present moment; but it is the present moment, not in a state of barren insulation, but considered in all its relations to God, man, and the universe. But it is perfectly obvious, that the duties of the present moment cannot be fulfilled in their moral extension without calling in the aid of a calmly reflective and sanctified judgment.

7. When an action is performed, to which we are prompted by a gracious and not a mere natural or satanic impulse, but which action is not attended with all those good results which we expect and hoped, we are entirely

acquiescent. We receive the result without trouble of mind. For instance, we are led, in the providence of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to converse with a person on the subject of religion; and, contrary to our hope and expectation, he coolly and superciliously rejects our message. The result, though painful, does not disquiet us. We leave it calmly in the hands of God. Whereas a person, who performs an action from an impulse which is not from the Spirit of God, and who finds the result different from what he expected, will be likely to experience a degree of unsubmitive dissatisfaction, and to show signs of fretfulness. And I think it a matter of common observation, that Christians who are governed in a considerable degree by natural or any other impulses not divine, mistaking them for a truly spiritual guidance, are, to use the common expression in the case, "always in trouble"; sometimes with the church, sometimes with their minister, sometimes with one thing, and sometimes with another; and alas! not unfrequently, although they seem to be wholly unaware of it, with the wisely-ordered providences of God himself. They are not childlike, and meek, and lowly in heart, as those always are who are truly guided by the Holy Spirit. They are not like the Saviour, who, when He was oppressed and afflicted, opened not His mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

8. We are continually taught by good men in the Bible, that we ought to be like our heavenly Father, to be holy as He is holy, to be perfect as He is perfect. And I suppose it is the general design and aim of Christians, who are striving after high attainments in holiness, to bear this blessed image. But probably not any of us conceive of God as acting impulsively and without reflection, as regulating His conduct by the stupid instinct of impressions, without the clear light of perceptive rationality. We

should be deeply afflicted and affrighted in being obligated to ascribe to our heavenly Father such a character as this. Similar views will apply to the Saviour. He himself says (John 5:30), "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: [that is to say, the communications of the Holy Spirit call my judgment into exercise] and my judgment is just; because [implying in the remark that He was uninfluenced by any suggestions and impressions from self] I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Are we not safe, then, if God desires and requires us to be like himself, and to be like Him also, whom, in the likeness of man, He has set before us as our example, in saying that a judgment enlightened by the Holy Spirit is the true guide of our actions, rather than blind impulses and impressions?

It will be remembered that we do not absolutely deny the occasional existence of impulses and impressions resulting from the operations of the Spirit of God. But we cannot well avoid the conclusion, that they are entitled to no influence, and are not designed to have any, except in connection with the subsequent action of an awakened and sanctified judgment. And it is this view only which can rescue them from the imputation of blindness and irrationality, even when they come from a good and right source. When, therefore, we speak of them as blind and irrational, we wish to be understood as speaking of them as they are in themselves, and without being enlightened by the subsequent action of a sanctified intellect. The subsequent action of the mind, which may always be expected to follow when they come from the Holy Spirit, cannot fail to impart to them a new and interesting character.

In conclusion, we would remark, that the doctrine of present sanctification has much to fear from not accurately distinguishing natural and satanic impulses from the

true movings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Many who ran well for a time, but who afterwards yielded themselves to impulsive influences which were not from the Spirit of God, have wandered into perplexed and divergent paths, to the injury of the cause of holiness and of their own souls. And we would just remark here, that the most interesting and satisfactory illustrations of holy living which have come under our notice are the cases of persons who endeavor constantly to put themselves under the direction of a sanctified intellect; who are willing to do anything and everything for the glory of God, but who feel that they need and must have wisdom. These persons can testify that they are guided by the Holy Spirit; but they can testify, also, that the Holy Spirit does not require them to do anything which an enlightened and sanctified intellect does not appreciate and approve. And hence their course is marked by consistency and sound discretion. They are not different men at different times, on whom no dependence can be placed. They are always at their post, supporters of the ministry, pillars in the church, patient under opposition and rebuke, faithful in warning sinners, counsellors in times of difficulty, mighty in the Scriptures, and they are burning and shining lights in the world. It is such persons that truly sustain and honor the blessed doctrine of holiness, presenting before the world the mighty argument of consistent holy living, which unbelievers cannot confute, and which the wicked and the envious are unable to gainsay.

### CHAPTER THREE

## EVIDENCES OF BEING GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is the object of the present chapter—without professing, however, or attempting, to exhaust the subject—to lay down some of the marks or evidences of being guided by the Holy Spirit.

1. And accordingly, we proceed to remark that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will be eminently perceptive and rational. The operations of the Holy Spirit, in the agency which He exerts for the purpose of enlightening and guiding men, will not be found to be accidental, or arbitrary, or, in any sense, irrational operations. It is hardly necessary to say here, after what has been said in the chapter on the "Distinction between Impulses and a Sanctified Judgment," that the Holy Spirit is not an ignorant, but a wise Being—not an agent that is moved by unenlightened impulse, but by perfect knowledge. And this being the case, it is a natural supposition, and one which will be generally assented to, that His operations will always exist in accordance with, and not in opposition to, the laws of the human mind. And, furthermore, according to the Scriptures, a primary and leading office, though not the only office of the Holy Spirit, is to *teach* men—to lead them into the *truth*. And if so, then, ordinarily, the first operation will be upon the intellect, in distinction from the sensibilities and the will. And we do not hesitate to say, in point of fact, and as a matter of personal experience, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will find that this divine agent does, in reality, impart an increased clearness to the intellectual

or cognitive part of the mind. This divine operation is, for the most part, very gentle and deeply interior; revealing itself by its results more than by the mere mode of its action; but it is not, on that account, any the less real. It seems to put a keenness of edge, if we may so express it, upon the natural perceptivity, so as to enable it to separate idea from idea, proposition from proposition; and thus to guide it, with a remarkable niceness of discrimination, through the perplexities of error into the regions of truth. We repeat, therefore, that one evidence of being guided by the Holy Spirit is, that such guidance contributes to the *highest rationality*; in other words, the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit (other things being equal) will be the most keenly perceptive, judicious, and rational; not flighty and precipitate—not prejudiced, one-sided, and dogmatical—but, like his great inward Teacher, calmly and divinely cognitive. The experience of holy men, particularly of those who have made it a practice to ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit on their studies, agrees with this statement.

2. We observe, in the second place, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will possess a quickly operative and effective conscience. This is too obvious to require much elaboration. It seems to be impossible that a man should be guided by the Holy Spirit and not experience a purified and renovated activity of the moral sense. This important result is what might naturally be expected, among other things, from the result on our intellectual nature which has already been indicated. It is well known that the conscience operates in connection with the intellect, and subsequent in time. There must necessarily be certain intellectual movement. And in accordance with this law, in proportion as the truth, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, develops itself from the intellect with greater and greater clearness, the action of

the conscience becomes increasingly distinct, sensitive, and energetic. It becomes a sort of flaming sword in the soul, and keeps it in the way of life. Accordingly, on this principle, no man who has a dull and sleepy conscience, a rough and blunted edge of moral perceptivity, is at liberty to say that he is guided by the Holy Ghost.

3. When we are led by the Holy Spirit, there will be a subdued, tranquil, and well-regulated state of the natural sensibilities, in distinction from the moral sensibilities or conscience; that is to say, of the various appetites, the propulsive principles, and the affections. It is well understood that when we are led by the world or by Satan, the various natural propensities and affections which constitute what we understand by the natural sensibilities are, in general, ill-regulated, agitated, and turbulent. A really worldly man is either externally or internally an agitated man; generally in movement, and generally discordant with himself; resembling the troubled sea, and casting up to the surface of his spirit mire and dirt. On the contrary, he who is led by the Holy Spirit, with the exception of those occasional agitations arising from *purely instinctive* impulses, which do not recognize the control of reason and the will, is always subdued, patient, quiet. His natural propensities, which, in persons who have not experienced the same grace, are so turbulent and violent, run peaceably and appropriately in the channels which God has assigned to them. His natural affections, which so often become the masters and tyrants of the mind, submit to the authority of conscience and the will. The inroads and shocks of the heaviest afflictions pass over him, and leave his inward submission and his peace unbroken. A divine tranquility is written upon the emotions and desires—upon the affections that linger upon the past, and upon the hopes that move onward to the future. In this respect, being under this divine and transcendent teach-

ing, he is like his heavenly Father. The Infinite Mind is always tranquil.

4. We remark, again, that the teachings of the Holy Spirit will have a tendency to beautify and perfect the outward manner, as well as the inward experience. And accordingly he who is truly under this divine direction will always find his conduct characterized by the utmost decency, propriety, and true courteousness. I believe it is a common remark, that a truly devout and holy person may, in general, be easily recognized by the outward manner. And this remark, which is confirmed by experience, has its foundation in nature. The natural life, which is inordinately full of self, and is often prompted in its movements by passion, pride, and prejudice, will of course develop itself in an outward manner as extravagant, inconsistent, and imperfect as the inward source from which it springs. Hence it is that we so often see, in the intercourse of man with man, so much that shocks our notions of propriety; so much, in word or in action, that is characterized by violence or levity; so much that is unsuitable to the time and place. But he, on the contrary, in whom the natural life is slain, and in the center of whose heart the Holy Spirit has taken up His residence to inspire it with truth and love, will discover an outward manner as true, as simple, and as beautiful as the inward perfection from which it has its origin. A voice inspired with gentleness and love; a countenance not only free from the distortions of passion, but radiant with inward peace; a freedom from unbecoming gaiety and thoughtless mirth; a propriety of expression resulting from seriousness of character; a disposition to bear meekly and affectionately with the infirmities of others; a placid self-possession; an unaffected but strict regard to the proprieties of time, place, and station—can hardly fail to impress upon the



outward beholder a conviction of the purity and power which dwell within.

5. We proceed to say, further, that he who is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will always find himself in the position of coincidence and union with the divine providences. He will not only be in harmony with whatever is true and beautiful in human intercourse, but there will also be no jarring and no points of discordant contact between his conduct and the unerring consecution of providential dispensations. This will be sufficiently obvious, we suppose, after what has been said in some of the preceding chapters, without going into any length of discussion. It is unquestionable that the will of God is made known, to a considerable extent, in His providential dealings. Consequently, the language of the Holy Spirit will never, in any case, contradict the correctly interpreted language of divine Providence. On the contrary, they will always completely, and, as they have but one author, will necessarily, harmonize. To illustrate the subject, the Holy Spirit will never instruct an individual to give to religious purposes a certain amount of property, when the providence of God, by taking away his property, has rendered the donation an impossibility. Again, the Holy Spirit will never, by an interior teaching, instruct a man to go upon a distant missionary enterprise, when at the same time the providence of God, by placing him on a bed of sickness, has rendered him incapable of the requisite physical and mental exertion. And if any impressions or convictions, which thus involve a contradiction of the voice of the Spirit and the voice of Providence, should rest upon the mind of any person, he may be assured that they come from a wrong source, and ought to be rejected. We assert, therefore, that he who is led by the Holy Spirit will find his conduct beautifully harmonizing with the events of divine providence, as they daily and hourly develop them-

selves. In other words, while he is continually led by the inward guidance to do and to suffer the divine will, he always finds himself acting and suffering in co-operation with the manifested designs and arrangements of God.

6. He who is led by the Holy Spirit will find his conduct, just so far as he is the subject of this divine guidance, in entire harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures. It has already been intimated that the voice of the Spirit can never be contradictory to itself. And accordingly, having spoken in the Scriptures, it can never contradict what it has there said by any interior revelation to individual minds. If, for instance, the Scriptures, dictated by the divine Spirit, have, for wise and adequate purposes, authorized and required the specific observance of the Lord's day, and have authorized and required the setting apart of the ministry, or have recognized and established other institutions and ordinances, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the same Spirit, in contradiction to himself, will guide individual minds to a disregard and contempt of those institutions. And in like manner, if the Bible, in any case of specific and personal action, requires a thing either to be done or to be omitted, the Holy Spirit operates to the performance in the one case and to the omission in the other. And in all cases whatever, as the Holy Spirit speaking in the heart, and the Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible, necessarily utter the same voice, they will necessarily, in their ultimate tendencies, lead to the same result.

And we may remark further, in connection with what has now been said, that he who is led by the Spirit will *love* to be led by the Spirit. It will be his delight. And consequently, he will be led to the Bible as one of the most valuable means of ascertaining the leading of the Spirit; he will read it much; he will read it with seriousness, candor, and prayer, that he may know the length and

breadth of the divine communications which are there made. And the pleasing and important result will be, that his life will be characterized by the same traits of submission and love, of regard for the divine institutions and precepts, of prompt and consistent action, and of mighty faith, which adorn the lives of those of whom the Scriptures give us an account.

7. *Finally*, we may remark in conclusion, and as in some sense embracing the whole subject: It is an evidence that a person is guided by the Holy Spirit, whose whole conduct, whether considered in its particulars or in its general outline, has a distinctly favorable bearing on the promotion of God's glory in the world. The end of all things is the glory of God. In the promotion of this great object, God the Holy Ghost co-operates with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Ghost, therefore, recognizes and enforces the great truth that all subordinate tendencies, that all inferior and private interests, whenever they receive a corrected and sanctified direction, will always converge to the same center, and will never reach their *terminus*, if we may so express it, except in the bosom of the adorable Infinite. To this great result all his interior and individual teachings infallibly tend. To know all things, and to love all things, in God; to annihilate self in all the various forms of creature-love and of self-will, and to make God the great center of our being; this only is true wisdom and everlasting life. He, therefore, who is led by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, will be taught that he must think for God, feel for God, will for God, act for God; and that the great reality of God, which is the true beginning and completion of all religious life, must be received into the soul as the paramount motive; and with a power to expel all subordinate motives, and to reign there forever with supreme dominion.

Such are some of the marks by which those may be known who are led by the Divine Spirit. These are a *hidden* people. They have intimacy with the Highest; but they are, nevertheless, the little ones that are almost unknown among men. Rational with the highest degree of rationality, scrupulously conscientious, ever desirous to learn the will of God as manifested in His Word and providences, modest and sincerely courteous and becoming in their intercourse with their fellow men, and governed under all circumstances by a supreme regard for God's glory, they pass calmly and devoutly through the world, blessed in themselves and a blessing to others. And yet the people of the world, blinded by their unbelief, but little know and little value that interior instruction, by which they are thus guided to the illuminated heights of evangelical perfection. Happy is he who is led, not by mere sights and sounds, not by strange and momentary impressions, which may come from the disordered senses, from the world, or from the devil; but by that clear light which illuminates the intellect, the conscience, and the heart; which is ever consistent with itself and with God's Word and providences; and which has, in reality, for its author, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ON THE STATE OF INWARD RECOLLECTION

I believe it is the case that all those, who have had much experience in the principles and methods of interior living, agree in attaching a very great importance to the state of *inward recollection*. It is certainly difficult to meet the crosses and trials of life with composure, and to sustain the soul on other occasions in purity and peace, without the aid of inwardly recollected habits of mind. However sincere may be our desire for entire devotedness of heart, and whatever resolutions we may form with that view, we shall often find ourselves in confusion of spirit, and inadvertently failing, in the fulfillment of our own resolutions, without this important aid.

*Inward recollection* is that serious and collected state of mind, in which God is realized and felt as the inward and present counsellor, guide, and judge of all our actions, both internal and external. In its results, when it becomes the fixed habit of the soul, it not only restores God to the inward possession, and establishes Him upon the throne of the intellect and heart, but, differing from that condition in which He comes in broken and fragmentary visits, it sustains Him there essentially, without interruption, in what may be termed a continuance or perpetuity of presence. In a word, it is the devoutly and practically realized presence of God in the soul, moment by moment. This is the state of mind which we cannot hesitate in saying all Christians ought to be in. It is hardly necessary to say that it is a scriptural state of mind. It is obviously implied and taught in those numerous passages of Scripture which inculcate the duty of watchfulness, which speak of setting

the Lord always before us, of walking with God, and of our inability to do anything without Him. And it is not more agreeable with God's Word than it is suited to man's condition; not more scriptural than it is necessary. We need it in order to know what to do. We need it in order to do what is proper and necessary to be done in a just, Christian, and holy manner. We need it in all times and places, and in small things as well as great, since there are no times and places from which God ought to be excluded, and nothing is so small that it may not have great and important relations.

It will be objected, perhaps, that the state of inward recollection, considered as a state of long continuance, and still more as perpetual, is an impracticable one. Whatever it may be to others (and undoubtedly it is a state of mind which is never experienced either in the absence of religion or in a low state of religion), it is certainly not impracticable to a person of a truly devout spirit. But how can it be possible, says the objector, inasmuch as the religious life is made up, in a great degree, of specific religious duties, that a person can give the attention of his mind to those duties, and be occupied with the distinct idea of God at the same time? The difficulty which is implied in this objection, whatever may be its reality or its extent, is met and obviated, at least for all practical purposes, by an acknowledged law of our mental nature. We refer to the principle or law of habit. By means of this law, the rapidity of the mental action may be increased to a degree almost inconceivable; so much so that actions, which are distinct in time, will appear to be simultaneous; and objects, which are separately attended to, will appear to be embraced in one mental view. And so far as all practical purposes are concerned, the acts of the mind, which thus separately and successively take place, may be truly regarded as one act. And applying this law to the

state of inward recollection, we may easily see how the mind may be occupied with a specific duty, and may at the same time be percipient of the divine presence, and may also connect the two together and impart to them a character of unity, so that the duty may properly be said to be done in a religiously-recollected state. The movement of the mind in relation to the duty, and then in relation to God as cognizant of the duty, and the transition from one to the other, are all so exceedingly rapid that memory does not ordinarily separate and recognize them as distinct acts; and thus, in our apprehension and consciousness of them, they are blended together as one. God, therefore, in our mental contemplation of Him, may be made present to all our specific duties; and thus the essential condition is fulfilled, which enables the mind to exist in the state of inward recollection. It is our privilege, therefore—a privilege too often undervalued and neglected—to do everything which Christian duty requires, as in the divine presence, *in God and for God*. We proceed now to specify some of those antecedent conditions or tendencies of mind, which may properly be regarded as preparatory, and even indispensable, to the state of inward recollection.

1. In the first place, there must be a sincere and earnest desire to possess it. This eminent grace, without which the kingdom of God in the soul will be liable to constant eruptions and overthrows, will never be possessed by a heart that is indifferent to its possession. It can belong to those, and those only, who with a sincere disposition to seek God in all things can be truly said to "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

2. In the second place, in order to possess recollection of spirit, it will be necessary not to be involved, to an undue extent, in the perplexities of worldly business. There is such a thing as admitting the world and its

cares into the mind so much that it crowds out the great idea of God. Indeed, this is often done. And thus men, and some of them, too, who occasionally observe the formalities of religion, become practical atheists. I notice, in reading the religious writings of Antonia Bourignon, that she expresses her opinion to one of her correspondents, that God had sent a certain affliction upon him in order to bring him to the state of mind which we are now considering. "The multitude of your comings and goings," she remarks among other things, "and other agitations of body, do, without doubt, disturb the *inward recollection*. It is impossible to converse purely with God, that is to say, when we permit them to have their natural effect upon us, in the midst of external agitations." And again she says, in writing to another person, "If you could but proceed in this affair, keeping your spirit *recollected* in God, I doubt not but it would succeed to His glory and your great good. I speak always of this *recollection*, because I myself *can do nothing out of it*. God's spirit is a well-regulated, orderly spirit, which proceeds with temperance, and weight, and measure, and discretion, *without any manner of precipitation*."

3. In the third place, in order to possess inward recollection, we are to have nothing to do, *as a general rule*, in thought or in feeling, or in any other way, with anything but the present moment, and its natural and necessary relations. Discursive thoughts of a flighty and purely imaginative character—either going back to the past, for the mere purpose of drawing pleasure from it, or prospective and anticipative of the future in the manner of an idle man's reverie—are great hindrances to a recollected state. We are, in that way, rather pleasing ourselves than God; and the divine presence cannot well be secured at such times. In other words, as a general rule, there must be before us some present object; and that



object must be regarded by us particularly in its moral aspect and relations. The present moment is necessarily, to a certain extent, a declaration of the divine will, and furnishes the basis of present duty. And it is the duty of the present moment, considered in its moral extension, to which, and to which only, God will consent to be a party.

4. It may be added, further, that the state of mind which we are considering will not be likely to be possessed without great fixedness of purpose; a holy inflexibility of will, which keeps the mind steady to its object. We must not only wish to be the Lord's in this matter, but *resolve* to be so. It is well understood that even worldly objects, restricted as they are in compass and importance, cannot, in general, be satisfactorily accomplished by an unfixed and vacillating mind; and still less can the vast objects of religion. I know, if the great object of interior recollection is proposed to be secured by the mere labor of the will alone, without the co-operation of the affections, it will be hard work, and useless work, too. And, on the other hand, a favorable posture of the affections will be of but little avail, unless the desires and inclinations are aided by the superadded energy of a fixed determination. But when the decisive and uncompromising act of the will combines its influence with that of the aspirations of the heart, the most favorable results may, with the grace of God, be reasonably expected. It is true that without the grace of God nothing can be done, whatever may be the applications and discipline of the mind. But when the conditions which have been mentioned are fulfilled, the divine assistance, if we may rely upon the promises, can never be wanting.

a) It has already been intimated that the state of mind to which our attention has been directed is one of great practical importance. And we proceed, therefore, to observe now, that one of the benefits connected with the

state of inward recollection is, that it is favorable to the best improvement of time. It will be a matter of course, that the person who lives in religious recollection will avoid unnecessary employments. With the idea of God, and perhaps we may add with the reality of God, continually present in his heart, scrutinizing every motive and action, and continually enforcing the claims of moral obligation, he will find no time to be spent idly, nor for the mere purposes of pleasure. Nor can he under such circumstances be the subject of internal dissipation, of vain and wandering imaginations and reveries; but will be enabled, to a degree unknown before, to bring every thought, as well as every feeling, into subjection. In order to prevent misapprehension, it may properly be added here, that whatever recreation of body or mind, either by social intercourse or in any other way, is really required by the physical and mental constitution and laws, is entirely consistent with duty and with inward recollection—a remark, however, which requires, in its practical application, no small share of wisdom.

b) Again, the state of inward recollection tends to diminish greatly the occasions of temptation. It is very obvious that he who knows nothing but his present duty in itself and in its relations, which is all that is necessary for him to know, cannot be so much exposed in this respect as other persons. Unspeakable dangers must, of necessity, beset the mind which is full of worldly activity, and which is continually discursive—running upon errands where it is not called; curiously and unnecessarily speculative; prying oftentimes, with microscopic minuteness, into the concerns of others, not only without reason, but against reason. What a flood of tempting thoughts must flow out upon these various occasions and throng around the mind! What suggestions, which Satan knows well when and where to apply, to envy, distrust, anger,

pride, worldly pleasure, ambition! none of which probably would have approached the mind that remained recollected in God.

c) Another remark is, that inward recollection helps us to know the truth, especially moral truth. The supreme desire of him who has fully given his heart to God is, not merely that he may be happy and thus please himself, but that he may *know* and *do* God's will. Knowledge, therefore (we do not mean all kinds of knowledge, but particularly that which has relation to the divine will), is obviously of the greatest consequence; and those will know most who who are the most recollected. The truth opens itself to the mind, that faithfully perseveres in the state of inward recollection, with remarkable clearness; and the reason, in part, is because the mind, in a religiously-recollected state, ceases to be agitated by the passions. "The light of God," says the writer already referred to, "shines as the sun at noonday; but our passions, like so many thick clouds opposed to it, are the reason that we cannot perceive it. Love, hatred, fear, hope, grief, joy, and other vicious passions, filling our soul, blind it in such a manner that it sees nothing but what is sensible and suitable to it; *refusing all that is contrary to its own inclinations*; and being thus filled with itself, it is not capable of receiving the light of God." Now, there can be no question that inward recollection secures the soul in a most remarkable degree from inordinate passions. Such passions cannot well flourish with the eye of God distinctly looking upon them. And accordingly, under such circumstances, the illuminative suggestions of the Holy Spirit readily enter the mind, and operate in it, and reveal the divine will; so that he who walks in recollection may reasonably expect to walk in the light of true knowledge and of a divine guidance.

And not only this, inward recollection tends to concentrate, and consequently to strengthen very much, the action of the intellectual powers. It does this, in part, and indirectly, by disburdening the mind of those wandering thoughts and unnecessary cares and excitements, which, with scarcely any exception, overrun the minds of those who do not live a recollected state.

d) Another favorable result, connected with the habit of inward recollection, is that, by confining the mind to the present moment, and retaining God in the position of a present counsellor and guide, it prevents the exercise of reflex and selfish acts on the past, and also undue and selfish calculations for the future. Self, if we permit it, will either secretly or openly find nourishment everywhere; and everywhere, therefore, we are to fight against it, overcome it, slay it. When the past is gone, and we are conscious that we have done our duty in it, if we would not have the life of self, imbibing strength from that source, we must leave it with God in simplicity of spirit, and not suffer it to furnish food either for vanity or disheartening regrets. We should avoid also all undue and selfish calculations for the future, such as continually agitate and distract the minds of the people of the world; and indeed, we should avoid all thoughts and anticipations of a prospective character, which do not flow out of the facts and the relations of the present moment, and which are not sanctified by a present divine inspection. "Happy is the man," says Fenelon, "who retains nothing in his mind but what is necessary, and who only thinks of each thing just *when it is the time to think of it*; so that it is rather God who excites the perception and idea of it by an impression and discovery of His will which we must perform, than the mind's being at the trouble to forecast and find it."

e) Again, we have good reason for supposing that the state of mind under consideration is eminently propitious to the spirit and practice of prayer. There certainly can be no acceptable prayer without a considerable degree of recollected state. "He who is always dissipated," says a certain writer, "like a house open to all comers and goers, is very unfit for prayer. He that will never pray but in the hour that calls him to it, will never do it well. But he that would succeed in this great exercise ought, by continual *recollection*, to keep himself always ready and in an actual disposition for praying."

f) Finally, one of the great excellences of the state of inward recollection is, that it gives us the place of central observation and power—the *key*, if we may so express it, to the position of the religious life; and enables us to exercise an effective control over its whole broad extent; that is to say, it places us in the most favorable position to discover and meet the attacks of our spiritual adversaries, and also to render our own movements and efforts fully available. However well disposed may be our intentions, whatever good purposes we may have formed, whatever may be the formality and solemnity of our recorded resolutions, they will ever be found in a great degree useless, without this aid. It will be in vain to think of living a life of true religion, a life in which God himself is the inspiring element, without a present, permanent, and realizing sense of His presence. It is, therefore, not without a good degree of reason that the pious Cecil has remarked that "*Recollection* is the life of religion."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ON THE INWARD UTTERANCE, OR THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE SOUL

"I laid my request before the Lord, and the Lord answered me." This is a remark which is frequently made by persons of eminent piety. They cannot doubt that they truly hold communication with God. Addressing Him either in silence or the spoken utterance of words, they find that they do not ask without receiving. God speaks to them in return.

It is important to understand the nature of the answers which God gives. In those earlier religious dispensations, of which we have an account in the Old Testament, God answered His people in various ways; by visible signs, by the cloud and the fire, by Urim and Thummim, by miracles, and by audible voices. The periods of those dispensations have passed away, and the methods of communication which were appropriate to them have passed away also. What are we to understand, then, by the divine utterance—the voice of God in the soul—of which those persons, who are eminently pious at the present time, have frequent occasion to speak?

We remark, in the first place, that one class of those inward utterances, which are frequently regarded as returns or answers from God, appear to be impressions, or rather suggested thoughts, or suggestions, which are suddenly but distinctly originated in the mind, and apparently from some cause independent of the mind itself. Sometimes the suggestion consists in suddenly bringing to the mind a particular passage of Scripture, which is received as the divine answer.

Sometimes the suggestion consists in the sudden origination of new ideas, or truths in a new form of words; but truths so remarkable, either in their origin or in their applications, that we are disposed to regard them as the inward intimations and the voice of God. Of the frequent existence of such inward and sudden suggestions or impressions, we suppose there can be no reasonable doubt. It is well understood, and seems to be placed beyond question, that they make a portion of the internal history of many pious persons.

A few remarks may properly be made on this class of inward voices; and one is, that sudden suggestions or impressions may have, and that they do sometimes have a natural origin. The natural man, as well as the religious man, will sometimes tell us that he has had an unexpected or remarkable suggestion or impression. In the treatise which exists on the subject of disordered mental action, the existence of frequent and sudden impressions, such as have been described, is laid down, and apparently with good reason, because the results have justified it as one of the marks of an incipient state of insanity. Another remark, which it may be proper to make here, is this: It is a common, and probably a well-founded opinion, that sudden inward suggestions or impressions may have, and that they do sometimes have, a satanic origin. If Satan is permitted to operate upon the human mind at all, and lead it astray, of which the Scriptures do not permit us to doubt, it is certainly a reasonable supposition that he sometimes makes his attacks in this manner. And especially may we take this view, when we consider that he is a spiritual being, and would more naturally act upon the spirit or minds of men than upon the body. A third remark is, that the sudden suggestions or impressions which we are considering are undoubtedly, in some instances, from a truly good or divine source. It is hardly reasonable

to suppose that God would forbid himself a method of operation on the human mind which He allows to Satan; and which, if it may be employed under a bad direction to a bad purpose, is also susceptible, in other hands, of a good one. We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that the Holy Spirit sometimes adopts this method of operation.

It remains to be added here, that if these remarkable suggestions may arise from sources so various and different, they should be received with caution; otherwise we may be led astray by the voice of nature or the voice of Satan, believing it to be the voice of our heavenly Father. God deals with us as rational beings. And it is a consequence of God's recognition of our rationality, that He does not require us to act upon sudden suggestions or impressions, even if they come from himself, without our first subjecting them to the scrutiny of reason. And it is here that we find the ground of our safety in respect to a method of operation upon us which otherwise would be likely to be full of danger. Accordingly, when a sudden suggestion is presented to the mind, we ought to delay upon it, although it may seem, at first sight, to require an immediate action. We should compare it with the will of God, as revealed in the Bible. We should examine it dispassionately and deliberately, with the best lights of reason, and with the assistance of prayer. Indeed, if the suggestion comes from God, it is presented with this very object; not to lead us to action without judgment and without reason, but to arouse the judgment from its stupidity, and to put it upon a train of important inquiry. And when this is done in a calm and dispassionate manner, and with sincere desires for divine direction, we have good reason to believe that we may avoid the dangers which have been referred to, by detecting those sugges-



tions which are from an evil source, and may realize important benefits.

But we ought not to feel, that, in our inward conversation with God, we are limited to such occasions as have been mentioned, and that we have no inward response, except by means of sudden and remarkable impressions which are liable to the dangers which have been indicated, and which generally exist only at considerable intervals from each other. On the contrary, we have abundant reason for saying that it is our privilege always to be conversing with God, and always to receive the divine answer. It is a great truth—almost as evident on natural as it undoubtedly is evident on scriptural grounds—that, when we have given ourselves wholly to God, He will give himself to us in all that is necessary and important for us. And this general principle involves the subordinate idea that He is willing to communicate knowledge, and to become our *teacher*. We ought not to doubt that God is ready to speak to us with all the kindness of a Father, and to make known all that is necessary for us. And while, in the process of teaching and guiding men, He operates outwardly, even at the present day, by means of His written Word, He also operates inwardly by means of interior communications; sometimes by sudden suggestions, in the manner which has already been mentioned; but much more frequently and satisfactorily, by availing himself of the more ordinary laws of the mind's acting, and by uttering His inward voice through the decisions of a spiritually-enlightened judgment. This is a great practical and religious truth, however much it may be unknown in the experience of those who are not holy in heart—that the decision of a truly sanctified judgment is, and of necessity must be, the voice of God speaking in the soul.

But this important doctrine, it must be admitted, requires to be correctly and thoroughly understood. It should be particularly remembered that God does not and cannot speak in this way, unless there is *sincerity*. And by sincerity we mean a sincere desire to do His will in all things, as well as a sincere desire to know and do His will in the particular thing which is laid before him. Such sincerity, which may be regarded as but another name for entire consecration, naturally excludes all the secret biases of self-interest and prejudice, and places the mind in the position most favorable for the admission and discovery of truth. It is in such a mind, and not in a mind which is governed by worldly passions, that the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to guide men into all necessary truth, loves to dwell. We may, therefore, lay down the general principle, that the decision of a spiritually-enlightened judgment, made in a state of entire consecration to God's will, and with a sincere desire to know His will, may justly be regarded as a divine answer or an answer from God, in the particular matter or subject in relation to which an answer has been sought. The decision of the judgment, which is arrived at in such a state of freedom from self-interest and passion, and under the secret guidance of the Holy Spirit, is oftentimes so clear and so prompt that it almost seems to be a voice audibly speaking in the soul. It is true, however, in point of fact, that it is only the bodily ear which is spoken to. In yielding our assent to the decisions of our judgment, we have *faith*, under all the circumstances of the case, and especially in view of the promise of God to give light to those that sincerely ask Him, that we are adopting the decisions to which our heavenly Father would lead us; so that we may confidently say, that the answer of the judgment, in connection with the spirit of entire consecration, on the one hand, and of entire faith in God's promises, on the other,

is God's answer; that is to say, is the answer which God, under the existing circumstances, sees fit to give, whether it be more or less full and explicit. And this is all which the truly humble Christian either expects or wishes to receive, viz., such an answer, be it more or less, as God sees fit to give. Even if he is unable to come to a specific determination on the subject before him, he still feels that he is not without an inward voice. He has God's answer even then; viz., that, under the circumstances of the case, God has no specific communication to make, and that He requires him to exercise the humility and faith appropriate to a state of ignorance. And this response, humbling as it is to the pride of the natural heart, He truly regards as very important, and as entirely satisfactory. It is in this method—a method which appears to be free from dangers—that God ordinarily answers and converses with His people.

In view of what has been said we come to the conclusion that it is very proper for pious people, especially for those whose hearts are truly sanctified, to speak not only of laying their requests before God, but of receiving a divine answer. It is not improper for them to speak, if it is done with a suitable degree of reverence, of holding *conversation with God—of talking with God*. The expressions correspond with the facts. To talk with God; to go to Him familiarly, as children to a parent; to speak to Him in the secrecy of their spirit, and to receive an inward answer, as gracious as it is decisive—is not only a privilege granted them, but a privilege practically realized. When, therefore, we find, in the memoirs of very pious persons, as we sometimes do, statements and accounts of their holding internal conversations with God, of the requests they make, and of the answers they receive, we are not necessarily to regard such experiences as fanatical

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or deceitful. On the contrary, we think it impossible for a person to be truly and wholly the Lord's without frequently being the subject of this inward and divine intercourse.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ON THE PRINCIPLE OF INWARD QUIETUDE OR STILLNESS

We proceed, in this chapter, to lay down and explain a principle which is more or less distinctly recognized by writers on Christian experience, and which, by the common consent of those who have examined it, is very intimately connected with the progress and perfection of the interior Christian life. The principle is that of inward *quietude or stillness*; in other words, *a true and practical ceasing from self*.

1. This principle involves, in the first place, a cessation from all inordinate and selfish outward activity. It does not, it will be remembered, exclude an outward activity of the right kind. To entertain any idea of this kind would be a great error. But it disapproves and condemns that spirit of worldly movement and progress, that calculating and self-interested activity, that running to and fro without seriously looking to God, and without a quiet confidence in Him, which has been, in all ages of the world, the dishonor and the bane of true Christianity. How much of what may be called secular scheming and planning there is in the church at the present time! How much of action, prosecuted on principles which certainly cannot be acceptable to a truly holy heart! While it exhibits much of true piety, and much of the right kind of action, is it not evident that the church exhibits a great deal, also, both in its plans of personal and of public activity, of that restless, unsanctified, and grasping eagerness which characterizes, and may be expected to characterize, those who live and act as if there were no God

in the world? The principle of quietude, or stillness, decidedly condemns this injurious and evil course.

2. But this principle has inwardly still more important results. The true state of internal quietude or stillness implies three things.

a) And, accordingly, our first remark is, that true quietness of soul involves a cessation from unnecessary wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations. If we indulge an unnatural and inordinate curiosity; if we crowd the intellect, not only with useful knowledge, but with all the vague and unprofitable rumors and news of the day, it is hardly possible, on the principles of mental philosophy, that the mind should be at rest. The doctrine of religious quietude conveys the notion of a state of intellect so free from all unnecessary worldly intruders, that God can take up His abode there as the one great idea, which shall either exclusively occupy the mind, or shall so far occupy it as to bring all other thoughts and reflections into entire harmony with itself. This is, philosophically, one of the first conditions of union with God. It seems to be naturally impossible that we should realize an entire harmony, or oneness, with the divine mind while the soul is so occupied with worldly thoughts flowing into it, as almost to shut out the very idea of God. A state of religious or spiritual quietude is, in other words, a state of rest in God. The idea of God, therefore—that magnificent and glorious idea—must so occupy the intellect, must be so interwoven with all its operations and modes of thinking that the thoughts of other things, which so often agitate and afflict the religious mind, may be easily shut out. And in order to do this, they who would be perfect in Christ Jesus must not mingle too much in the concerns of the world. Little have they to do with the unprofitable frivolities and pleasures of secular society, with idle village gossiping, with the trades, and adven-

tures, and speculations of those who hasten to be rich; with the heats and recriminations of party politics, and with many other things which it would be easy to mention. No reading, also, should be indulged in, which shall tend to separate between the soul and God. Knowledge is profitable, it is true; but not all kinds of knowledge. It is better, certainly, if we cannot, consistently with religious principles, have a knowledge of both, to be familiar with the Psalms of David than with the poems of Homer; not only because the former are in a higher strain, but especially because heavenly inspiration should ever take precedence of that which is earthly. When, however, we read in the world's books from the sense of duty—when we may be said to read and study for God and with God—then, indeed, the great idea of the Divinity remains present and operative in the soul. And such inquiries and studies are always consistent with Christian quietude, because the mind, venturing forth at the requisition of the great Master within, returns instinctively, at the appointed time, to the inward center of rest. Hence we should lay it down as an important rule, to chasten the principle of curiosity, and to know nothing which cannot be made, either directly or indirectly, religiously profitable. Such knowledge, and such only, will harmonize with the presence of the great idea of God. All other knowledge tends to exclude it. And hence it is, that it can be so often said of those who possess all worldly knowledge, to whom all arts, and languages, and sciences, are familiar, that God is not in all their thoughts. The intellect is not in sufficient repose from the outward and purely worldly pressure constantly made upon it, to receive Him. He comes to the door, but finds no entrance, and leaves them alone in their folly.

Perhaps, in order to prevent mistakes, it should be added that, when the mind is thus in a state of quietness

and repose from worldly and errant imaginations, it does not by any means follow, as some may suppose, that it is therefore in a state of sluggish and insentient idleness. Not at all. No sooner has it reached the state of true stillness, by ceasing from its own imaginative vanities, and thus giving entrance to the purifying and absorbing conception of the great Divinity, than it becomes silently but actively meditative on the great idea. Not, indeed, in a discursive and examinative way, not in a way of curious inquiry and of minute analysis, but still active and meditative; much in the manner, perhaps, that an affectionate child silently and delightedly meditates on the idea of an absent parent; not analytically and curiously, but with that high and beautiful meditation which exists in connection with the purest love; or much as any persons, who sustain to each other the relation of dear and intimate friendship, when in the providence of God they are separated at a distance, often repose in mental stillness from all other thoughts inconsistent with the one loved idea; and thus reciprocally the mind, active in respect to everything else, centers and dwells with each other's image.

b) Again, the state of internal quietude implies a cessation or rest from unrestrained and inordinate desires and affections. Such a cessation becomes comparatively easy when God has become the ruling idea in the thoughts; and when other ideas which are vain, wandering, and in other ways inconsistent with it, are excluded. This rest, or stillness of the affections, when it exists in the highest degree, is secured by perfect faith in God, necessarily resulting in perfect love. We already had occasion to say that perfect faith implies, in its results, perfect love. How can we possibly have perfect faith in God, perfect confidence that He will do all things right and well, when, at the same time, we are wanting in love to Him? From per-



fect faith, therefore, perfect love necessarily flows out, baptizing, as it were, and purifying, all the subordinate powers of the soul. In other words, under the influence of this predominating principle, the perfect love of God resting upon perfect faith in God, the harmony of the soul becomes restored; the various appetites, propensities, and affections act each in their place and all concurrently; there are no disturbing and jarring influences; and the beautiful result is that quietness of spirit which is declared to be "in the sight of God of great price."

Those who are privileged, by divine assistance, to enjoy this interior rest and beautiful stillness of the passions, are truly lovely to the beholder. The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, tossed about by conflicting passions, and are not more unhappy in themselves than they are unlovely in the sight of holy beings. There is a want of interior symmetry and union: that guiding principle of divine love, which consolidates and perfects the characters of holy beings, is absent; the lower parts of their nature have gained the ascendancy, and there is internal jarring and discord, and general moral deformity. In such a heart God does not and cannot dwell. How different is the condition of that heart which is pervaded by the power of a sanctifying stillness, and which, in the cessation of its own jarring noise, is prepared to listen to the "still small voice"! It is here that God not only takes up His abode, but continually instructs, guides, and consoles.

On this part of the subject, in order to prevent any misapprehension, we make two brief remarks: The first is, that the doctrine of stillness, or quietude of the desires and passions, does not necessarily exclude an occasional agitation arising from the *instinctive* part of our nature. The *instincts* are so constituted that they act, not by cool reason and reflection, but by an inexpressibly quick and agitated movement. Such is their nature. Such agita-

tion is entirely consistent with holiness; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that even the amazement and fears, which are ascribed to our blessed Saviour at certain periods of His life, are to be attributed to the operation of this part of His nature, which is perfectly consistent with entire resignation, and with perfect confidence in God. The other remark is, that the doctrine of internal quietude, pervading and characterizing the action of the sensibilities, is not inconsistent with feelings of displeasure, and even of anger. Our Saviour was at times grieved, displeased, angry; as He had abundant reason to be, in view of the hardness of heart, and the sins, which were exposed to His notice. Anger (so far as it is not purely *instinctive*—which at its first rise, and for a mere moment of time, it may be) is, in its nature, entirely consistent with reason and reflection; is consistent with the spirit of supplication, and consistent, also, even in its strong exercises, with entire agreement and relative quietude in all parts of the soul. In other words, although there is deep feeling in one part of the soul, the other parts—such as the reason, the conscience, and the will—are so entirely consentient that the great fact of holy, internal quietude, which depends upon a perfect adjustment of the parts to each other, is secured. A strong faith in God, existing in the interior recesses of the soul, and inspiring a disposition to look with a constant eye to His will alone, keeps everything in its right position. Hence there still remains the great and important fact of holy internal rest, even at such trying times.

c) We proceed now to the third characteristic. The true state of internal quietude implies a cessation not only from unnecessarily wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations, not only a rest from irregular desires and affections, but implies, in the third place, a perfect submission of the will; in other words, a perfect renuncia-

tion of our own purposes and plans, and a cheerful and perfect acquiescence in the holy will of God. Such a renunciation of the will is indispensably requisite. It is not to be understood that we are to have no will of our own, in the *literal* sense; this would be inconsistent with moral agency; but that in its action, under all circumstances, however adverse and trying, our will is cheerfully and wholly accordant with God's will. A mind in such a state must necessarily be at rest. It realizes that God is at the helm of affairs, and that necessarily all the plans of His wise and great administration shall come to pass. Why, then, should it be troubled? "What a blessed thing it is," says Dr. Payson, "to lose one's will! Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment, for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished." The blessedness of such a soul is indeed indescribable. It is an inward death, out of which springs inward and eternal life, a self-annihilation, out of which rises immortal power. The man who has the true quietude is like a large ship firmly at anchor in a storm. The clouds gather around, the winds blow, the heavy waves dash against her, but she rides safe in her position, in conscious dignity and power. Or perhaps his situation is more nearly expressed by the memorable and sublime simile of Goldsmith:

*As some tall cliff, that rears its awful form,  
Swell from the vale and midway leaves the storm—  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.*

But some will say, "Is there to be no action? and are we to do nothing?" A person in this state of mind, being at rest in the will of God, and never out of that divine will, is operative precisely as God would have him; moving as God moves, stopping where God stops. He is at rest, but *never idle*. His God forbids idleness. There-

fore he keeps in the line of divine co-operation, and works *with* God. There may be less of vain and noisy pretension, and sometimes less of outward and visible activity; but there is far more wisdom, and far more actual efficiency; for God is with him.