

blessedness at last, however, to overcome. He conquered. He fought his way to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, and gained the hidden manna, and the white stone with the new name, known only to himself. But now came instantly an entire change of view about the whole matter of perfection. In the experience, his own utter vileness was shown him, just as Isaiah saw his in the vision of the Lord on his throne; and like Daniel in his vision of the glorious Redeemer in his amber purity and sunlight holiness, he felt his very comeliness turned into corruption. While at the same time he saw the fulness of God's glorious grace, and felt that Jesus would be with him evermore, to keep him and work in him by the Holy Spirit his own holy will. And then came instantly the question, "Is this the perfection I have been seeking?" The answer was irresistibly, "No." He had been seeking and expecting to be wholly sanctified in a moment by divine power, and made fully conscious that he was absolutely and entirely holy. But, instead of that, he had his eyes opened to see his utter unholiness, and to see that Christ must answer wholly for him, and clothe him altogether with his own (Christ's own) righteousness, and keep him by his own mighty power through faith, and change him as by the Spirit of the Lord from glory to glory in his own image. He rose, therefore, from his knees, not to profess himself perfect, by any means, but to say and to feel that Christ was all in all to him, while he was nothing but sin in himself.

At once and for ever he dropped the theory of perfectionism, and the terms, also, as misnomers of the experience, while from that day onward until now he has rejoiced in full salvation, through full trust in Jesus.

Here then we have two illustrations that the theory of perfection, and the fact of the experience in question, have no necessary connection. In the first, the experience was gained first while the theory was unthought of, and indeed shocking at the time, and adopted only after months of delay and speculation.

And in the second, the theory was adopted first, months before the experience was gained, and then thrown aside as at variance with the experience in the moment when that was gained.

Another and still different illustration may not be without use.

This whole subject, experience and theory together, had been forced upon the attention of one who had been then three years or more a cheerful, decided, happy Christian. It was disagreeable to her, not because she was not anxious to gain all that such an one as she might reasonably hope for. Already she had found more in religion, than in all the round of the gay world most fully tried, and really enjoyed by her. The nectar of love sipped from the lily of the valley, and from the rose of Sharon, had been too sweet to her to be turned from with disgust, or disrelish even. But heresy! the fear of heresy! or of fanaticism, or extravagance! She shrank from the approach of anything threatening in the least to drive her into ultraism. She could not bear the thought of separation between herself and the Christian world, in which she had found such sweet and happy fellowship. Every book upon this subject was avoided. All conversation about it carefully eschewed. At last, however, in a leisure, and yet a sacred hour, one Sabbath morning, when kept from the house of prayer by slight illness, her eye fell upon the story of another's experience of this second conversion, or, as he called it, Christian perfection. The narrative was simple, sincere, and truthful. She saw it to be true and real, and she saw it to be as blessed as true, and as necessary as blessed. In that hour her resolution was taken. She gave up her fears; resolved nobly to take the truth, and take with it whatever of loss or cross it might bring. The struggle was severe but short. The Lord graciously led her to believe in Jesus most fully, and she found rest. Peace as a river, joy in its sweet fulness,