

## HOLINESS.

Many ask, How can we be holy in this world? are we not sinful by nature, and there is sin all around us. But we might ask, How can we DARE to be otherwise, since God has commanded it and brought it within our reach. He is not a hard Master, seeking to gather where He has not strawed; or like Pharaoh, who required bricks to be made without furnishing material. But says one, Don't we sin every day? don't you? Well, if I did I should be very unhappy, for the wrath of God would abide upon me; but even if I did, I am not the standard by which you are to measure. Christ is the measure, He is the pattern; we must not measure ourselves by any human pattern. To the law and to the testimony; whatever that says must be right.

But what sin is it from which we cannot be delivered, will you specify? We will pass by the outward or visible sins, for if you profess to be a disciple of Christ you will surely have dropped all these. We will speak of sin in the heart, which no eye but that of God can see. Have you to struggle against pride, envy, guile, lust, covetousness, evil thoughts? Yes, thoughts! For thought is the most subtle, and at the root of all action; we must sin in thought before we act sin. Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Now, if we cannot be delivered from any or all of these, neither can your neighbor; and would you be willing your neighbor should exercise any of these upon you? No, indeed; you expect your neighbor to be right and to do right towards you and he has a right to expect the same of you; you must make no allowance for yourself.

Our Lord goes down to the root of the matter when He says in Matt. 5: 28, "Whosoever looketh . . . . to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart." And the Apostle says, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." Verily what we do with or in the mind, or with the desire, that is the sin we commit, for "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," though he may not have opportunity to put it in practice. Therefore it is the thoughts of the heart that must be cleansed. Then there must be such a thing as purity of heart, or Jesus would not have said, "Blessed are the pure in heart," if there were no such state. But experience and observation tells me that no one will find this "Pearl of great price" till he sells all—that is, parts with everything else to obtain it; until the one consuming desire of heart is to have everything that divides his heart or affections with God, anything that usurps His place, driven out.

Can this be done? O yes, most certainly. My own experience, if I may use it to illustrate. When life itself was not dear to me in comparison of this blessing, and after a season of deep humiliation on account of spiritual leanness, and a felt want, which I knew was the want of Christ reigning in me by the Holy Ghost, I went alone with God, and laid on the altar of consecration (and we are told the "altar sanctifieth the gift")