

examine into this thing? Beware lest that itself be the proof that your experience is faulty.

A holy life is not an inference or an argument drawn from certain premises, as for example: During the past week I have been wholly consecrated to God; the altar sanctifies the gift; therefore I have lived a holy life during these seven days. You may even be able to strengthen these premises with many additional arguments, as conscious willingness to obey God all the time, instances where you have been instrumental in improving the spiritual welfare of others, times of refreshing from the presence of God, both in public and private, when waiting on Him; all this and much more, and, after all, your experience of full salvation during the week may only be an inference and not a reality. The only ground of confidence for you as a child of God in this matter is the known approval of your Father which is in Heaven. Does He, through the Holy Spirit, directly testify to you that during the week in question you were sanctified wholly and preserved blameless? If so, then you were. If not, then no amount of inferential reasoning can establish the fact. Now this testimony must, in the nature of things, be so clear that there is no hesitancy, no lingering doubt in the soul concerning the matter. With glad confidence you thank God, in the presence of Son and Spirit, for His wondrous grace in preserving a sinful worm of the dust holy and unblamable before Him in love, and with joy you testify to others, if need be, of this abounding grace of God to you-ward.

You remember how grand your confidence in sins forgiven when God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart crying Abba, Father. With just as much confidence you recognize His voice in witnessing to your obedience to *all* His commands.

Now after this manner must be settled our claim to a holy life in all its aspects. Take, for example, religious joy, as founded on the command, "Rejoice in the Lord always." No wealth of argument can establish your assumption that you have, for any limited time, obeyed fully this

command, which leaves out the direct witness of the Spirit to the fact. You may talk about not being always on the mount of transfiguration, of having sometimes to come down to the valley of temptation and duty, you may add many platitudes about difference in temperament, about mental peculiarities and bodily ailments until you have enough fine spun argumentative threads to weave into a comforting garment, and into which you may fold yourself with intense satisfaction. But one ray of the blazing light of the Spirit let into your being will consume it in a moment, and leave you like your first parent naked in the presence of God. The supreme question for you to answer is, Does the Holy Spirit tell you that you have been as happy as God required you to be? That is, have you pleased God in your obedience to this reasonable command? If so, you know it with all the confidence you once knew your sins forgiven. If not, you cannot obtain that knowledge from any other source.

Take one other example. What about the command, "Be filled with the Spirit?" Do you catch yourself at the attempt to reason yourself into knowledge of obedience here, or do you turn instinctively to Him, your abiding Guest, to confirm you in the faith, and do you know by His conscious presence, by His direct impact on your spirit, and His assuring voice, that He has maintained His loved abode in your being, making it all these days the temple of indwelling God?

Now it does not follow, as a matter of course, that He has been abiding with you in His fulness because you have been walking in the light of justifying or sanctifying grace. Nothing attests this fact but His own present testimony. Does He now tell you that you are filled with His presence, and that this has been your experience these days? If so, then have your confidence before God and man in this matter. If not, no multiplying of arguments or inferences can establish the fact.

Again, dear consecrated soul, we press the question, with the additional force of these investigations, Is your Christian experience that of habitual, full consecration merely, or is it that of full posses-