

When this mighty change takes place—when the soul is emancipated from its thralldom,—when “old things are passed away,” and “all things have become new,”—then, and not till then, do we experience the first emotion of real love to God. But who shall tell the blessedness of that hour when the “love” which “the Father hath bestowed upon us,” becomes a felt reality? when in the light of the cross we read the wondrous story—“God so loved the world!” when in place of those corroding fears and gloomy apprehensions that have so long distracted the soul, there comes a “peace which passeth understanding,” and a “joy that is unspeakable and full of glory;” when, instead of Sinai’s hoarse thunders proclaiming—“the soul that sinneth it shall die,” there comes “a still, small voice” whispering of a dying Saviour, and a pardoning God; of sins forgiven, and a sinful nature renewed; of grace to sustain through life, and a home in heaven when the trials of life are ended. Language is too poor to tell the story. We can only cry as we bow in rapture at the Cross—

“God only knows the love of God!”

In this renewal of our moral nature there is given a complete victory over sin, so that “sin shall have no more dominion over” us. It is to be feared that on this point, not a few make a sad mistake. They suppose that, in a merely justified state, many things are allowable which would be altogether inconsistent in one professing entire sanctification. Let us beware lest in this we unconsciously “plead for Baal.” Be not deceived. “He that committeth sin is of the devil;” but “he that is born of God doth not commit sin.” Let it be regarded as a fixed principle that *no degree of sin is consistent with a profession of faith in Christ*. I do not say that in a justified state sin is utterly destroyed; but it is so subdued by Divine grace that it has “no more dominion over us.”

In the circumcision of the heart there is also implied the purification of our affections. Not only have we placed our affections upon wrong objects,—“loving the creature more than the Creator,”—but our hearts are impure. Both by original bias, and by long contact with evil, they have become “earthly, sensual, devilish.” They need to be not only renewed, but purified, and for this provision is made in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In His blood we have “the forgiveness of sins,” and the same blood “cleanseth from all sin.” In completing the circumcision of the heart He cleanseth it “from all the filth of self and pride,” expelling everything that is not in harmony with His righteous will, and filling the soul with that perfect love which casteth out fear. The highest form of love is that wherein God is loved *for His own sake*. This may be perceived by noting the successive states of one’s religious experience. When a man is converted to God, he at once feels love to the Saviour springing up within him. Ask him why he loves God? and he will tell you—“because He first loved me.” As he grows in grace, he obtains a more comprehensive view of God’s mercy in Christ; he proves the Divine goodness in ways before unthought of; he sees the love of God flowing in upon him through a thousand channels. Ask him why he loves God? He will answer—“Because of what He has done for me. He gave His Son to die for