

St. John says,  
what we shall  
see we shall see  
our own eyes  
in the sense

way of the old  
Before men  
around that  
elf. Human  
gratification.  
acts of direct  
But when the  
nd danger of  
eforth I will  
art, that is, a  
alace more or  
a greater or  
love with its  
switched on  
Heavenly

ne in the soul  
s not at once  
answer is easy,

e agents and  
s—the divine  
ough that the  
He would do  
ed not shrink  
ot do certain  
ot able to do  
nd disability.  
ais fact arises  
greatly more  
, but because  
d in adjusting  
nd fully than  
y the revela-  
fulness with  
at wonderful,  
ace, he would  
there? God  
le to receive.  
believer means  
otherwise he  
nlightenment  
mperfect and

d with us in  
o go, and to  
hen a person  
er, to receive  
it is followed  
experience a  
is is precisely  
h more satis-  
mplished, so  
put on. But  
no case is it  
together with

an absolutely complete apprehension of the divine love. The new life, therefore, is a mixed experience, an inward war between the new principle of love just planted in the heart and still surviving evil; and that this is so, is abundantly attested by the universal consciousness of young converts, as well as by that of "old babes in Christ" who have remained in spiritual infancy.

The question now arises "How long is this war to go on; how long is this mixed experience to continue?" Some say "till death." These maintain that there can be no such thing as perfection in this life, that the best Christian experience is described more or less accurately in the 7th chapter of Romans, where it is said "when I would do good evil is present with me," "the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do." Many Protestants, therefore, have taught a death-sanctification though sorely pressed to find, in all the Scriptures, a single proof text to support their theory, while the Roman Catholics, with the help of Plato, have invented a *post mortem* purification for curable souls in the fires of purgatory.

And that was the state of Christian thought on this subject when John Wesley began his ministry. The providential promoter of that great revival of spiritual and experimental religion, which gave an upward impulse to universal Christianity, applied himself to inquire earnestly into the extent of gospel salvation possible in this life. While pondering this problem God came to his help by raising up hundreds of unimpeachable witnesses, whose saintly lives, consistent in divine holiness to the end, confirmed their unanimous testimony to a complete and instantaneous deliverance from indwelling sin. After a patient and thorough questioning of these witnesses, and study of the Holy Scriptures, and after a personal experience, as consistency and truth on the part of Wesley require us to believe, he began earnestly to preach and to defend against all opposers, the doctrine of Christian perfection attainable in this life by faith in Christ Jesus; and he came to regard this doctrine, exhumed from the rubbish of ages, as "the great depositum committed by God to the people called Methodists."

Now, what precisely—precisely as we can state it—is the doctrine of Christian Perfection?

I have referred to the Perfection in the text as Perfection in glory. St. Paul speaks of the same thing in another epistle. In Phil. iii, 8-14, he pours out his passionate desire to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and that he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. He says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And what was this prize? Perfect manhood; entire Christlikeness; which cannot be reached this side the resurrection.

But, surely, there is another kind of Perfection recognized in the Bible, for in the very next sentence to the one I have just quoted the Apostle says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." He has just said that he was not yet made perfect. Now he claims that he is perfect. Could anything make it plainer that there are two senses, a higher and a lower, in which the word is used? There is a Perfection which is reached by growth; there is another Perfection which is reached by grasp—the grasp of faith—this is Christian Perfection—the privilege of the Christian in this life.

Now, how shall we best describe this state of grace? Not by single words, not by phrases, but by exhibiting its constituent elements. I would not call it the "second blessing," though my brother uses that term. I will not contend with him over a phrase. I know what he means. My desire is to get at the thing, whatever it may be called. But how easy it is to cavil at the phrase "second blessing!" How many say "I believe not only in the second blessing, but in the twentieth, and the hundredth." After all, there may be something very special in the second, or the twentieth as the case may be. I take it that our Christian progress is both continuous and spasmodic, like that of the vessel in that canal. It sails along smoothly until it runs into a lock. There it is shut in. Tumultuous waters are let in beneath it, and it rises. It is banded