

should aim at the sinless life. We might come much nearer it than we do. Men make their moral weakness an apology for sin, and think, because they cannot reach sinless perfection, they need not attempt it. In short, they think they may be contented if they keep themselves free from grosser sins. They do not strive after holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Those mistaken people who preach, and profess to reach a life free from sin, do much harm by their erroneous teaching. But their unscriptural claims may lead us to investigate the subject, and so lead us to discover our own errors as well as theirs. These are, on the one hand, to make far too little of sin, to regard it as of little consequence; and on the other hand, to yield too willingly to the power of it, to make too little of holiness. To hold erroneous views, then, concerning sin, affects seriously, both the doctrine and life of the church. We believe and confess with ever deepening convictions that sin is in us. To claim that we can live a sinless life is to deceive ourselves. But we should earnestly seek to be free from it, to abhor it, and to rise above the power of it. We are content in the church of God with too low a standard of character. It is the saints of God who make the most humble confessions of sin.

7. We should have recourse to the remedy provided for it. There are only three words used in the New Testament to describe the nature of that remedy, namely the words (*lutros*) "ransom," (*katallage*) "atonement or reconciliation," and this word here used, (*hilasmos*) "propitiation." One other term is once used, but these are the principal ones used to describe the atoning work of Christ. And the manifest lesson is, that we, ourselves, should not undertake to deal with that with which Christ has come to deal. He is the propitiation for our sins; why, then, should we think of providing or presenting any other. Sin is something more than we have conceived it to be, since only Jesus Christ can make atonement for it. Nothing that we can do in repenting or reforming, or keeping the law, is sufficient as a propitiation. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. While, then, sin is so great an evil, and our lives are so grossly stained by it, while we are conscious of guilt as great and frequent transgressors, we have reason to rejoice in the

wonderful provision which God in His grace has made for the removing of our guilt in Jesus Christ. He is both our advocate and our propitiation. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."—(Ep. 1: 7) We are, therefore, invited to come in all our guilt to Him, and so coming we receive the forgiveness of our sins. This lesson, of Christ the only and the Almighty Saviour, is the lesson to which all other truth is leading us. Whatever else we fail to teach, we should not fail to teach this.

8. Obedience is the true test. There is one other lesson arising out of what has gone before. It is one which touches the foundation of the Christian life. Namely, that obedience is the true test of our faith, our love, and our knowledge. Much emphasis requires to be laid on this lesson, because men are taught, and the young are taught, that religion, and obedience to the commands of God, can be separated without sin; that one can, for example, consistently sing and pray with the foremost, and at the same time trample the Sabbath day under foot; that one can be very piously engaged in a meeting, and without being inconsistent, can go home and disobey one's parents. Obedience to the commands of our Lord is the test which He himself demands of us. All that religiousness and enthusiasm which leaves the ten commandments dishonored, is a religiousness and enthusiasm which God has no respect for. It is of no value. Young people, sometimes, under unwise counsel, lay burdens upon themselves which Christ does not lay upon them. They invent services and ceremonies which are unscriptural and unprofitable, but are thought to be useful, because they are unusual. Jesus Christ will be greatly pleased with us if we keep His commandments, even though we do not keep other commandments which men have invented for us. To honor father and mother, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, may not be so conspicuous a service as some which we engage in before the public, but it is a kind of service that is acceptable to God, and prescribed by Him, and a much surer test of our faith and love, and knowledge. It is our walk which testifies to our spirit. Not our occasional efforts; but the daily, steady walk in all weathers, in the way of His commandments.