



Helps to Holiness

Chapter 24 – BIRDS OF PREY

Against the entire sanctification of believers Satan brings to bear all his devices, his sophistical arguments, and the full force of his powerful will; but the resolute soul, determined to be all the Lord's, will find him a conquered foe, with no power but to deceive. The way to overcome him surely is to will to steadfastly believe and agree with God, in spite of all Satan's suggested doubts.

In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, we have an account of Abraham's sacrifice, which is very suggestive to the seeker after full salvation.

Abraham took certain beasts and birds, and offered them to God. But after he had made the offering, and while he was waiting for the witness of God's acceptance, birds of prey came to snatch away the sacrifice. Abraham drove them away. This continued until the evening, and then the fire of God consumed the offering.

Just so, he who would be entirely sanctified must make an unreserved offering of himself to God. This act must be real, not imaginary – a real transfer of self, with all hopes, plans, prospects, property, powers of body and mind, time, cares, burdens, joys, sorrows, reputation, friends, to God, in a "perpetual covenant not to be forgotten." When he has thus given himself to God, to be anything or nothing, go anywhere or stay anywhere for Jesus, he must, like Abraham, patiently, trustingly, expectantly wait for God to witness that he is accepted.

"Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry ... but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 3, 4).

Now, during this short or long period of waiting, the devil will surely send his birds of prey to snatch away the offering.

He will say, "You ought to feel different if you have given yourself wholly to God." Remember,



that is the devil's bird of prey – drive it away. Feeling is always produced by some appropriate object. To have the feeling of love, I must think of some loved one; but the very moment I get my thought off the object of my love, and begin to examine the state of my feelings, that moment my feelings subside.

Look unto Jesus and pay no attention to your emotions; they are involuntary, but will soon adjust themselves to the fixed habit of your faith and will.

"But, maybe," something suggests, "your consecration is not complete; go over it again and be sure."

Another evil bird of prey – drive it away.

Satan becomes exceedingly pious just at this point, and wants to keep you eternally on the treadmill of consecration, knowing that, as long as he can keep you examining your consecration, you will not get your eyes on the promise of God, and, consequently, will not believe; and without faith that your offering is now accepted, it is only so much dead works.

"But you do not have the joy, the deep and powerful emotions that others say they have." That is another bird of prey – drive it away.

A woman recently said to me: "I have given up all, but I have not the happiness I expected."

"Ah, sister," said I, "the promise is not unto them that seek happiness, but, to them "which hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled." Seek righteousness, not happiness."

She did so, and in a few moments she was satisfied, for with righteousness came fullness of joy.

"But faith is such an incomprehensible something, you cannot exercise it; pray to God to help your unbelief."



The devil's bird of prey – drive it away.

Faith is almost too simple to be defined. It is trust in the word of Jesus, simple confidence that He means just what He says in all the promises, and that He means all the promises for you. Beware of being "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 3).

I tell you, dear comrade, everything that is contrary to present faith in the promise of God for full salvation is one of the devil's birds of prey, and you must resolutely drive it away if you ever get saved.

Quit reasoning with the devil! "Cast down reasonings (2 Cor. x. 5, margin), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," and trust. Reason with God. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18). At one of our watch-night services, a man knelt at the table with quite a number of others, seeking a clean heart. He was told to give himself wholly to God, and trust. Finally, he began to pray, and then he said: "I do give myself to God, and now I am going to live and work for Him with what power I have, and let Him give me the fullness of the blessing and power just when He chooses. He has promised to give it to me, and He will do it, will He not?"

"Yes, my brother; He has promised, and He will surely perform," I replied.

"Yes, yes; He had promised it," said the man. Just then light shot through his soul, and his next words were: "Praise the Lord! Glory to God!" He reasoned together with God, and, looking to the promise, was delivered. Others about him reasoned with the devil, looked to their feelings, and were not sanctified.

But after you have taken the step of faith, God's plan is for you to talk your faith. The men of character, of force and influence, are the men who put themselves on record. The man who has convictions, and who is not afraid to announce them to the world and defend them, is the man who has true stability. It is so in politics, in business, in all moral reforms, in salvation. There is a



universal law underlying the declaration: "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If you are sanctified, and would remain sanctified, you must at the earliest opportunity put yourself on record before all the devils in Hell and all your acquaintances on earth and all the angels in Heaven. You must stand out before the world as a professor and a possessor of heart purity, of "Holiness unto the Lord." Only in this way can you burn all the bridges behind you; and until they are destroyed, you are not safe.

The other day a lady said to me: "I have always hesitated to say, 'The Lord sanctifies me wholly'; but not until recently did I see the reason. I now see that I secretly desired a bridge behind me, so that I might escape back from my position without injury to myself. If I profess sanctification, I must be careful lest I bring myself into disrepute; but if I do not profess it, I can do questionable things and then shield myself by saying, 'I do not profess to be perfect.'"

Ah, that is the secret! Be careful, dear reader, or you will become a religious fence rider, and the devil will get you; for all who are astride the fence are really on the devil's side. "He that is not for Me is against Me." Get away over on God's side, by a definite profession of your faith. But the devil will say: "You had better not say anything about this, till you find out whether you will be able to keep it. Be careful, lest you do more harm than good."

Drive that bird of prey away quickly, or all you have done thus far will be of no avail. That bird has devoured tens of thousands of offerings just as honestly made as yours. You are not to "keep the blessing" at all; but you are to boldly assert your faith in the Blessor, and He will keep you.

Only yesterday a brother said to me: "When I sought this experience, I gave myself definitely and fully to God, and told Him I would trust Him; but I felt as dry as that post. Shortly after this, a friend asked me if I were sanctified, and before I had time to examine my feelings, I said 'Yes'; and God that minute blessed me and filled me full of His Spirit, and since then He has sweetly kept me."

He talked his faith, and agreed with God.



"But you want to be honest, and not claim more than you possess," says Satan.

A bird of prey!

You must assert that you believe God to be honest, and that He has promised that "What things so ever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24). Count God faithful.

A former soldier of mine gave herself to God, but did not feel any difference, and so hesitated to say that God had sanctified her wholly.

"But," she said, "I began to reason over the matter thus: I know I have given myself wholly to God. I am willing to be anything, do anything, suffer anything for Jesus. I am willing to forego all pleasure, honor and all my cherished hopes and plans for His sake, but I do not feel that God sanctifies me; and yet He promises to do so, on the simple condition that I give myself to Him and believe His Word. Knowing that I have given myself to Him, I must believe or make Him a liar; I will believe that He does now sanctify me. But," said she, "I did not get any witness that the work was done just then. However, I rested in God, and some days after this I went to one of the holiness conventions, and there, while a number were testifying, I thought I would rise and tell them God sanctified me. I did so, and between rising up and sitting down, God came and witnessed that it was done. Now I know I am sanctified."

And her shining face was a sufficient evidence that the work was, indeed, done.

Dear reader, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Give yourself wholly to God, trust Him, then confess your faith. "And the Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. iii. 1).