

AFTER HOLINESS IS GONE

There are no doubt some who once enjoyed full salvation who have been caught in some snare of the tempter and missed God's way far enough to grieve the Spirit out of their lives. Then there come various experiences and struggles that make the soul discontented. Life is now lived on such a different plane. The soul may be unconscious of what has taken place and will not know surely until God sends an awakening.

There are certain characteristics of the life of that person who once enjoyed God's fullness but now is void of the help of the Spirit. He finds he is unable to get his prayers through satisfactorily. He may be forgiven for his fault, for his heart will naturally cry out for forgiveness for anything that has caused such a condition. But even though forgiven, it will cost much more to get back the fullness of God. Suffering and chastisement may be a part of the price to pay for a complete restoration.

The following things are characteristic and portray the way in which the individual is living who has grieved the Holy Spirit out of his life.

I. It is a defeated way.

The sanctified life was such a victorious way but now there are defeats that cannot be accounted for, it seems. Prayer is different. Formerly, it was intercession for others and the advancement of the kingdom, but now much time will need to be spent in praying for one's self. Preaching is not like it used to be. No new revelations of the Spirit are manifest and the preacher is conscious that he does not have the help of God as before. In this condition, the soul is not able to carry out spiritual ideals and standards as he once did.

II. It is an unhappy way.

It is a wonderful experience to go from the regenerated life to the sanctified life but when the Spirit has been grieved it seems that one's pathway is filled with briars and thorns. Holy Fire is gone and Divine Providence does not overshadow so much now. This life has deprived itself of the rivers of living water.

III. It is an uncomfortable way.

The Comforter is gone. He dwells only where souls obey Him. There seems to be an estranged relation. He is not within but only there to convict the soul who is in this state. So the soul hungers and thirsts for the things once enjoyed. Carnality is now coloring and affecting all that this one tries to do and all labor seems so imperfect. How uncomfortable!

IV. It is a suffering way.

In spite of the loss the soul has sustained, God is still faithful and is endeavoring to bring about the restoration. He has only one way to do it and that is by the way of chastisement. God's chastisement is, that we "might be partakers of His holiness." What almost indescribable suffering and conflicts with the powers of darkness are now experienced. These battles are not understood and the sufferer knows not their source. He may blame them upon Satan but it may be the hand of God resting heavily upon him. God makes this way almost unbearable so as to stir the sufferer to seek His face and deliverance.

V. It is a silent seeking way.

He cannot forget the victorious life. He does not care to tell many of his condition. His seeking and suffering is in secret. Oh, the thirst for the rich things he once had. He

seems not to know how to get them back. But seek he must for it is unsafe and unsatisfactory to live in this condition.

VI. It is a shameful way.

His countenance has fallen. His loss is so great. His hands hang down. His knees are feeble. The glory is gone. Samson is now shorn of his locks. He is in bondage to another. He is ashamed to acknowledge his condition. His service to God seems servitude.

VII. It is the way of correction.

"Shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" To take the chastisement rightly will mean that God will finally bring us out of the difficulty. To draw away from Him will only get us into further trouble. God's way is the only way out. "Make straight paths for your feet." Confess your state. Take the humble way and God will restore the peaceable fruit of righteousness. One might resort to the human and to try to make up the deficiency but it will not pay. If one does not hold steady and let God work things out, the soul may find refuge in false doctrine or he may even apostatize. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Reader, have you had better days in grace? Do you need an awakening that you have missed it somewhere? Will you be willing to confess your need? This is the only way back to complete restoration. Seek the Lord until He comes with the refreshing again.

—J. O. Emrick

SLOTHFULNESS

By John Bunyan

Solomon saith: "The desire of the slothful killeth him" and if so, what will slothfulness itself do to those that entertain it? The proverb is: "He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame;" and this I dare be bold to say, no greater shame can befall a man than to see he hath fooled away his soul and sinned away eternal life. And I am sure this is the next way to do it; namely, to be slothful; slothful, I say, in the work of salvation. The vineyard of the slothful man, in reference to the things of this life, is not fuller of briars, nestles, and stinking weeds, than is the heart of him that is slothful for heaven of heart-choking and soul-damning sin.

Slothfulness hath these two evils: First, it causeth people to neglect the time in which they should be getting ready for heaven. In the second place, it doth, by that means, bring untimely repentance. I will warrant you, that he who should lose his soul in this world through slothfulness, will have no cause to be glad thereat when he comes to hell.

Slothfulness is usually accompanied with carelessness, and carelessness is for the most part begotten by senselessness, and senselessness doth again put fresh strength into slothfulness, and by this means the soul is left remediless.

Slothfulness shutteth out Christ; slothfulness shameth the soul.

Slothfulness is condemned even by the feeblest of all creatures. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold (that is, he will not break up the fallow ground of his heart, because there must be some pains taken by him that will do it); therefore shall he beg in harvest (that is,

when the saints of God shall have their glorious heaven and happiness given to them,) and have nothing," or, be given the better for his crying for mercy, according to Matthew 25:10, 11, 12.

PROTECTING THE INNOCENT

Children are born into this world with the essence of sin in their hearts. This germ of sin is like an inherited physical disease which does not become active until the child has certain environments. The germ of leprosy in the child's body has power, when time is given, to make it all that is manifested in the worst case of leprosy. Even so, the germ of sin in the child's nature has power to debauch and ruin every spiritual and moral and physical power, leaving the individual deaf to the call of God, dumb to the possibilities of prayer, and blind to ever having an insight into the Word of God.

Sin becomes active in a child's life, so far as transgressing moral principles are concerned before it is able to fully understand its obligations to God's revealed will. The power that counteracts the development of this deadly germ is conscience. Conscience, if allowed to act will condemn a child and make him feel his guilt so keenly that it shows on the countenance. He feels he cannot hide it.

Many a child's conscience has been stifled, defiled and corrupted before the parents thought he was accountable. Modesty is a virtue which springs from a conscience that calls for God's standard of morality. A few years of carelessness about modesty has agitated sinful desires so that some have carried the mark of such all through life.

No child remains innocent morally when he is old enough to distinguish the difference between boys and girls, if they are allowed to mix together, even as brothers and sisters in the home, in immodest ways. Many times a wrong association has been allowed in the home during what was considered the innocent stage, which stirred evil imagination and inspired evil passions.

Some parents have allowed their children of the ages from three to six or older to dress, sleep and bathe together, thinking no harm could come from such. Modesty is thereby destroyed and curiosity takes its place. They feel no shame in taking the same liberties with and before other children of their age and older.

Parents have left their children at home alone without the proper oversight, and things have taken place which were the first steps toward a life of immorality and shame.

Some one has said that the parent must know the nature of sin well enough to keep two or three jumps ahead of the child and in this way protect the innocent from becoming guilty.—Anon.

TRUE AND FALSE SHEPHERDS

"The sheep must discern the things on which he feeds and avoid a corrupted nutriment, even when presented by the shepherd himself. The people should follow the shepherd into the pastures; but when he ceases to lead them into the pastures, he is no longer a shepherd, and then, since he does not fulfil his duty, the flock is not bound to follow him. Nothing is more effectual to the destruction of the church than a corrupted clergy. All Christians, even the the humblest and most simple, are bound to resist those who are destroying the church." —Written several hundred years ago.—Sel.