

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

"And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

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REGENERATION, A STEPPING STONE

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I once heard a Methodist give his experience of "holiness" before the Chicago Preachers' Meeting. He was trying to show how much his experience was to him. He said, "You know, I was at variance with one of the ministerial brethren. But when I got this experience, we made up." In the discussion that followed, one of the opposers of holiness said, "Regeneration will make a man to be at peace with his brethren." I was chagrined to have a Methodist minister blunder so much as to mistake regeneration for entire sanctification.

There are thousands who have underestimated regeneration. When they hear a testimony to entire sanctification, they propound the question, "Do you profess that you do not commit sin?" Freedom from committing sin is supposed to be the experience of those who testify to sanctification, notwithstanding that the Bible distinctly says, "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin." The trouble with so many who deny the possibility of entire sanctification in this life is that they have not entered into the experience of regeneration. They are not yet where sanctification begins.

Regeneration is a holy experience because it means separation from the world. "Who-soever is born of God overcometh the world." There are people who say it does not hurt their religion to go to the dance and the movies; and I am sure they are right in that statement. Put paper flowers out over night in the frost and it will not hurt them at all. John Newton said truly:

"As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed,
So earthly pleasures fade away
When Jesus is revealed."

No Christian has to go to the world for comfort, nor is he obliged to run after its pleasures to obtain soul food. He is spoiled for that sort of food.

Regeneration is a high and holy experience because it enables us to keep the divine commands. When I was in the evangelistic work I discovered that many were disturbed when I preached regeneration, for it is an experience that requires us to do right in all particulars. If we are required to go out of the sinning business in order to be regenerated, it requires no less to stay converted, for "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." A man once very frankly told me that he did not enjoy my preaching, for he wanted a margin to make a good horse trade.

The common sense of mankind says that if a man is a Christian he will behave himself; he will do what he ought to do and leave undone what he ought not to do. One of the axioms of the Christian life is: "Prayer will make a man leave off sinning or sinning will make him leave off praying." I once knew a deacon of a church in the East who was complaining to an unconverted man about the holiness preachers who had invaded his town. He said, "Why, those Yankee preachers are preaching that a Christian can live without committing sin. It is ridiculous!" The unconverted man replied, "Your Bible says you must so live." The deacon answered, "I sin every day, but I am sorry for it." Said the man, "So do I, and I am sorry for it, too." What was the difference between the two?

It is a mistaken Christianity that sings, "Our souls, how heavily they go to reach eternal joys!" or, "Father, and shall we live at this poor dying rate?" In the parable of the Ten Talents, Jesus describes the man who hid his talent in a napkin and came to his lord saying, "I feared thee because thou wast an austere man." He called his lord a hard master, and so do those who say it is a hard life to be a child of God. The trouble with them is that they have on the wrong yoke of service, or they have the right yoke on the wrong way. Jesus says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." The fact is, they have not determination to be thorough in their religion. It is, in every department of life, easier to be thorough than half-way.

This is the glorious experience of regeneration. It is as much above the life of the worldling as light above darkness. But great as it is, it is but the bottom round of the ladder. It is but the beginning of the spiritual life. The reason some oppose holiness is that they are not at the place where it begins.

But glorious as regeneration is, it has its hindrances. All the churches that have spoken on this subject confess that the hindrance to the life of regeneration is the carnal mind, that inward traitor which prompts to sinful acts. We read in Roman history that an army besieged a city and could not take it. But one dark night a little maiden slipped the bolts of the city gates and let in the army that took the city. That is what inbred sin does many times. If God cannot save us from the inward traitor, the experience of living a regenerate life is hopeless. Now entire sanctification, which expels the traitor from the heart, is simply regeneration made easy.

Regeneration is an appetizer for holiness. A regenerate man is born of the Holy Spirit. He has in him the divine nature. He who has the

life begotten by the Holy Spirit hungers and thirsts for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. He does not have to be driven to seek holiness of heart; it is the very longing of his soul. Even if he has never heard of holiness as a theory, he wants it as truly as an infant wants milk. When we were born the first time we had an appetite for milk; and when we were born the second time we had an appetite for holiness; the soul wants it like a child crying for food.

I have found many people who have come into the experience of holiness because, without a human teacher, they felt their need. They are like a man eating honey in the dark. It tastes good; but when one tells him that it is honey, he likes it all the better.

It would be absurd to hear a man pray thus: "O Lord, make my heart almost right, but not quite." Some people say, "I will be satisfied if I am about right." That is, "I am satisfied to be wrong." About right is wrong. As someone says, a regenerate man is not satisfied to be about right. He wants to be all right, upright, downright, and nothing but right.

What is the Christian life? It is one high life all the way along. I do not like to hear people say of holiness, "It is the higher life." The Bible never calls it by that name. It is a way to dodge the good Scripture names invented by the Holy Ghost. I do not like to hear people say, "When I was merely justified." We enter the high life of regeneration by agreeing with God and the light that He gives us, and we continue this high life by still agreeing with Him when we see it is our privilege to take another degree of spiritual life. The time comes when we must be entirely sanctified to remain justified.

The old Calvinists never dared to say they were saved, but that they "indulged a hope." And they had tests all the way along to prove their hope was genuine. The Apostle John gives us the test of a good hope, thus, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If we have a good hope, we receive a pure heart or we are earnestly seeking it. Now we may know if we are converted, by our attitude toward holiness.

"Uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways."—Psalms 51:12, 13. David prayed that God would uphold him by His free Spirit, that he might teach transgressors and turn sinners to God. A Christian should pray for the Spirit that he may be the more useful and glorify God more; not that he himself may be more happy. You ought to examine and see if your prayers are not tinctured with selfishness.

—Chas. G. Finney.