

HINDRANCES TO HOLINESS

G. D. Watson

Holiness is the most essential thing in the universe to a moral creature. Holiness is not an action, but a state of being which lies behind the action. Holiness is a state of purity, of simplicity, of unmixedness with foreign elements. All sin is a foreign element to pure, simple human nature. It is to the moral nature what a fever is to the blood. If purity—that is, unmixedness—is essential to having good water, good aid, good bread, good health, good soil for crops, it is infinitely more essential to the soul.

Holiness of heart is more essential to the well-being and destiny of the soul than knowledge, or power, or great talents. A holy nature will wonderfully utilize a small amount of knowledge, power or wealth; but on the other hand, the principle of sin will pervert and squander a vast amount of learning or riches or opportunity. Whatever hinders the attainment of complete moral purity blocks the train, strangles the life, and forfeits the true end of our being.

Perhaps the first great hindrance to holiness is a failure to apprehend its necessity. So many locate all goodness in the activities of life, and fail to discern the true state of being. So many think there is no sin except in the act, and no seeing that all inherent darkness, perversity, crookedness or impurity embedded in the nature itself is of the quality of sin, do not realize the necessity of being purified in the very substance of the inner nature.

It is comparatively easy to lead Christian people to appropriate Jesus as a sanctifier, when they once fully realize the absolute need of cleansing. Hence one of the most successful methods of preaching holiness is to analyze the heart, to delineate the features of the native inner man, to show his characteristics, his pedigree, his behaviour, his moral complexion, not only as he acts in the sinner, but also as he acts in a restrained and subtle way in the believer. If such a portrayal is made in a wise and scriptural manner, every honest and truly converted soul will see more or less his need of a deeper work of grace, and at the same time his conscience and judgment will side with the truth, though the carnal elements in him may rebel.

Another hindrance to attaining heart purity is the lack of being clear in justification. Sanctification begins in justification, and if we are not clearly pardoned we are below the point where holiness begins. To say that the people who are fully cleansed have just been restored from backsliding, is not only a slander on the work of God, but reveals great ignorance concerning the doctrine of Scripture and the deep facts of the soul.

Persons who most intensely hate inward sin, and most fervently desire the whole mind of Christ, are those who are in the clearest light of justification. A backslidden state dulls the apprehension respecting the need of holiness; it veils the pure nature of Christ from the understanding; it blunts the inward sensibilities to the touch of divine truth; it opens the mind to the reception of all sorts of heresies respecting divine things.

Another hindrance to holiness is viewing it in an unscriptural light, and holding unscriptural views respecting it. Among such unscriptural views is that of being purified from original sin at the same time we are pardoned from actual sin, and confounding the two. Also

the error that our sanctification is located in the person of Christ, instead of being imparted to our nature by the Holy Spirit. Also that of confounding the cleansing of the soul with growth in grace, and also the theory that inward sin is only to be repressed and not purged out of our being. The persistent holding of any one of these unscriptural views will effectually prevent the soul from entering into that rest of heart of which Canaan is a type.

There is a notion afloat among the churches that people can believe most anything respecting salvation, that they can hold several views about grace, or no definite view at all, and yet in some way blunder into deep religious experience. But the Holy Ghost never works along lines of error. It is true, thousands are saved and fully cleansed who do not understand the theology of it, but they do always apprehend the cardinal facts in the case.

There are many other hindrances such as an unwillingness to get light on the subject, a prejudice against the Scripture terms, stumbling over other people, being frightened at a stray fanatic, an unwillingness to give up self at some point. But whatever the hindrance may be, it must give way before we can enter the paradise of God. If we as God's children will keep our eyes on the main facts in the case, our need and Christ's supply, if we have a teachable and obedient heart, God will find ways to break down barriers, to send us help from unexpected quarters, and make the seemingly impossible melt away to an easy and simple thing.—Christian Witness.

WHAT HOLINESS IS NOT

John Thomas

Many preachers put the standard too high, beyond the reach of God's children, with the result that many give up the quest and, like the ten spies, magnify the difficulties and so lose sight of the God who is enough. Others put the standard too low, making excuse for sin; but these errors may be avoided by closely following the Scripture.

Holiness is not absolute perfection—that belongs to God alone. The perfection of man is relative.

Nor is it angelic perfection. Angels never make mistakes, and we are liable to make mistakes. Nor is it Adamic perfection that is commanded. Christian perfection, according to Matthew 5:48, is having the same mind and possessing the same love as Jesus.

Holiness is not perfect knowledge; it is not perfection of the head, but a perfect heart that is promised. Not many mighty men can see the way of holiness, but some poor fishermen of Galilee did, and we have known hundreds of the world's poor who enjoy this blessing, while many who are very learned can not understand it.

Holiness is not freedom from temptations. The Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities, but never helps our sins. The apostle Paul gloried in his infirmities because the power of Christ rested upon him, but he did not glory in his sin. Holiness admits of many infirmities, but not one sin.

Holiness is not freedom from temptations, but temptation is not sin unless it is yielded to. We shall always be open to the attacks of Satan, for in no other way could our allegiance to God be proved than by trials and temptations.

Holiness is not regeneration; this is the

birth of the soul into the Kingdom of God, and this includes forgiveness of sins, the impartation of life eternal, and the witness of the Spirit to our acceptance with God. Holiness is the removal of indwelling sin from the soul. Holiness is a second work of grace subsequent to regeneration, not necessarily more religion or more love or more power, but a cleansing of the soul from the pollution of sin by baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Holiness is not a state from which you cannot fall, but a condition where you may be kept from falling as you walk in the light. It is not that you are unable to sin, but by the power of God you are able not to sin, though the liability to sin ever remains.

Purity is not maturity; you may not understand very much or comprehend the deep things of God, but you can be pure in heart!—Selected.

WHAT THEN?

When the great plants of our cities

Have turned out their last finished work;
When our merchants have sold their last yard
of silk,

And dismissed the last tired clerk;

When our banks have raked in their last dollar,
And paid their last dividend;

When the Judge of the earth says, "Close for
the night,"

And asks for a balance—**What Then?**

When the choir has sung its last anthem,

And the preacher has made his last prayer;

When the people have heard their last sermon,
And the sound has died out on the air;

When the Bible lies closed on the altar,
And the pews are all empty of men,

And each one stands facing his record,

And the Great Book is opened—**What
Then?**

When the actors have played their last drama,
And the mimic has made his last fun;

When the film has flashed its last picture,
And the billboard's displayed its last run;

And the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,
And gone out in the darkness again;

When the Trumpet of Ages is sounded,
And we stand before Him—**What Then?**

When the bugle's call sinks into silence,
And the long, marching columns stand
still;

When the captain repeats his last orders,
And they've captured the last fort and
hill;

When the flag has been hauled from the mast-
head,
And the wounded afield are checked in,
And a world that rejected its Saviour
Is asked for a reason—**What Then?**

—J. Whitfield Green, in Brethren Mission

“There must be a conscience void of offence
toward God and men always. It is amazing
how little we Christians think of the intense
importance of keeping things clear between us
and other children of God.”

“Prayer makes the Christian armor bright.
It gives sharpness to the sword, point to the
arrow, and a heavenly polish to the helmet,
breastplate and shield. To your knees, then,
O Christian, and let every work be begun,
continued, and ended with prayer.”—Memoirs
of William Jackson.