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THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLINESS

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Christian holiness as a second work of grace is a fact or it is not a fact. If it is true—and it is—then its importance cannot be over emphasized. A great cloud of witnesses arise across the path of Christian history to declare its truth and its value.

The Scripture affords us abundant proof of the great plan of salvation. All who are real believers accept the fundamental fact of divine revelation, namely, that Christ died to provide an adequate remedy for sin. His death and man's sin problem are directly related. The sin problem involves man's relation to God, His holy law and government; and not only so, but his condition of heart, and his success or failure in sustaining ethical standards of life.

That sin is twofold in its nature is a fact sustained by Scripture and by universal human experience. We sinned: we stand guilty before a holy God and His righteous law. We are by our sins estranged from God. Our spirit capacity to register God in our consciousness as a living reality is dead in us. We do not by nature or wisdom know God. (Death always conveys the idea of separation, in all its uses of the word). The provision to meet our need fully recognizes these facts and offers to us in the first approach we make to God, through faith in Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, the cancelling of our guilt, the adjustment of our relationship with God, so that we become reconciled unto God and have peace with Him. Our burden rolls away. We come to know Him whom to know a right is eternal life.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). Amen. Glory to God!

The forgiveness of our sins, yea, justification through faith of Christ (justification means forgiveness on a legal basis, or in harmony with the righteousness of the law, and involves therefore the whole redemptive work of Christ and the conditions of a moral approach on the human side for our appropriation of the benefits of His death) and our being made alive—God-conscious in our spirit nature—are recognized needs which are fully adequately dealt with in the provisions of grace. We are made "free from the law"—

oh happy condition! We are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

Great and essential as are these facts, there remains an area of man's need to fully settle his sin problem which is not met as yet. This further need involves man's condition in the depth of his moral nature. This is a condition of need which pardon cannot reach, nor does being made alive from our spiritual death cover it. There is a "seed of sin's disease," a moral health, a perverseness of condition which calls for a radical treatment. There lurks a foe within man's heart from which he needs a complete deliverance. Something unholy pervades his human selfhood which lifts within him awful power.

"For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21-22). The same lips which taught this truth also taught that there is a condition of heart exactly opposite to the above. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The conditions of heart described by our Lord in the Mark Scripture are such as cannot be changed by pardoning mercies. Indeed, they are not acts of conduct, but a condition deep down in man's inmost self. That such condition exists is so in evidence in our everyday contacts that to deny it would be to fly in the face of facts.

Now the question is, is there redemptive provisions for this area of need? Can the heart of man be made pure? Is there a cleansing from all sin as truly as there is pardon for all our sinning? Did the finished provisions of Calvary include anything to meet this condition of need and deal with it as adequately as with our guilt and death?

"To the word, and to testimony" for our answer. The Word, first. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). "For their sakes I sanctify myself (offer, or separate myself unto sacrifice), that (in order that) they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19).

"In truth" sanctification, for which Christ died and for which He prayed, is that deep personal sanctification which only God can accomplish, and for which Christ made provision when he "offered himself without spot to God." Our self-sanctification is our dedication, consecration of ourselves and our all unto God; but His "in truth" sanctification is His

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FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

J. T. Hatfield

Do not fret because of evildoers, or worry about what other people do, or how things are going. Sing the doxology pray and praise.

Never allow yourself to think or speak of your own troubles or sorrows. It looks like hunting human sympathy. You do not need any; you need the Comforter.

Never entertain thoughts that anyone has done you an injury or an injustice. Forget the things of the past. Press toward the mark of the high calling, and let that be Jesus. Behold the Blood. Note the suffering. Remember it was all for you. Then think of Him. Tell Him that you love Him. He takes notice of every little remembrance. He loves to be loved.

Think nothing, do nothing you would not like to tell other folks. God is a person. He sees you. He hears you. The study of God will make you more careful on these lines.

Do not measure your experience by your blessings, but by how much can you bear. Live to do as much for your enemies as your friends.

Practice the Presence of God. Meditate upon that Presence. See Him in everything. Esteem the privilege of being in the presence of such a holy character. Live for nothing else but to prove Him and glorify Him in all things. Do not let it be wholly a mental exercise. Be much in the Spirit. Open up all the avenues of your entire being that He may fill you with nothing but Himself.

Do not allow yourself to look at your own goodness, but look at Him. Be much concerned if you should go long without some thrills of holy emotion. They are the holy elixir that keeps the inner man toned up. Feed often; do not put your soul on a fast. The body may need it, but the soul menu, the bill of fare, should be secret prayer, Bible reading, deep spiritual literature, careful thought upon freshly apprehended spiritual truth, and a great deal of concentrated thought upon the goodness of God. Keep your mind stayed upon Him and He will keep thee in perfect peace.—Heart and Life.

Obedience is a great New Testament truth, too much overlooked. Obedience is a proof of faith, and one of the very best proofs. It is a strong proof of loyalty. Worldly professions of faith and loyalty are abundant, and often they are but words. Loyal obedience to Christ's commandments proves our trust in Him and true affection for His cause in the world.

—Dr. Gilbert Laws.