

Personal Holiness

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"That opinion that personal holiness is unnecessary to final glorification is in direct opposition to even dictate of reason, to even declaration of Scripture." – Augustus Toplady

By our fall in Adam we not only lost the favor of God but also the purity of our nature and therefore we need to be both reconciled to God and renewed in our inner man, for without personal holiness "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "As He which hath called you is holy; so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior); because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16), God's nature is such that unless we be sanctified there can be no intercourse between Him and us. But can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? Genuine Christians discover so much carnality, filth, and vileness in themselves that they find it almost impossible to be assured they are holy. Nor is this difficulty solved, as in justification, by recognizing that though completely unholy in ourselves we are holy in Christ, for Scripture teaches that those who are sanctified by God are holy in themselves, though the evil nature has not been removed from them.

None but "the pure in heart" will ever "see God" (Matthew 5:8). There must be that renovation of soul whereby our minds, affections and wills are brought into harmony with God. There must be that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God and abstinence from evil which issues from faith and love. There must be that directing of all our actions to the glory of God, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. There must be a spirit of holiness working within the believer's heart so as to sanctify his outward actions if they are to be acceptable unto Him in whom "there is no darkness" True, there is perfect holiness in Christ for the believer, but there must also be a holy nature received from him. There are some who appear to delight in the imputed obedience of Christ who make little or no concern about personal holiness. They have much to say about being arrayed in "the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10), who give no evidence that they "are clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5) or that they have "put on. . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another" (Col. 3:12).

How many there are today who suppose that if they have trusted in Christ all is sure to be well with them at the last even though they are not personally holy. Under the pretense of honoring faith, Satan, as an angel of light, has deceived and is now deceiving multitudes of souls. When their "faith" is examined and tested, what is it worth? Nothing at all so far as insuring an entrance into Heaven is concerned: it is a powerless, lifeless, fruitless thing. The faith of God's elect is unto "the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). It is a faith which purifieth the heart (Acts 15:9), and it grieves over all impurity. It is a faith which produces an unquestioning obedience (Heb. 11:8). They therefore do but delude themselves who suppose they are daily drawing nearer to Heaven while they are following those courses which lead only to Hell. He who thinks to come to the enjoyment of God without being personally holy, makes Him out to be an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity upon Him. The genuineness of saving faith is only proved as it bears the blossoms of experimental godliness and the fruits of true piety.

In Christ God has set before His people that standard of moral excellence which He requires them to aim and strive after. In His life we behold a glorious representation in our own nature of the walk of obedience which He demands of us. Christ conformed Himself to us by His abasing incarnation, how reasonable therefore it is that we should conform ourselves to Him in the way of obedience and sanctification. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). He came as near to us as was possible for Him to do, how reasonable then is it that we should endeavor to come as near as it is possible for us to do. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me" (Matthew 11:29). If "even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3). how reasonable is it that we should be required to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24), for without so doing we cannot be His disciples (Luke 14:27). If we are to be conformed to Christ in glory how necessary that we first be conformed to Him in holiness: "he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked:"(1 John 2:6). "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19): let him either put on the life of Christ or drop the name of Christ.