

The Spirit of Holiness

by Samuel Chadwick

Holiness is a necessary aspect of the Christian life, a definite experience made possible by faith in the Holy Spirit, and maintained by abiding in the Living Word and giving free scope to the Spirit of Life.

Scripture: John 14:17, Romans 1:4, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Samuel Chadwick preaches about the significance of holiness, emphasizing its Biblical roots, necessity, and the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying believers. He clarifies misconceptions about holiness, highlighting its essential nature for all Christians and the need for a deliberate pursuit of sanctification. Chadwick explains that holiness is not merely a gradual growth but a transformative gift of grace through faith, distinct from maturity or achievement. He stresses that holiness is attained through the personal work of the Spirit of God, involving a unique experience for each individual, leading to a life marked by the presence and power of the Divine Spirit.

Transcript

The title of the Spirit most frequently used in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. The phrase "Spirit of Holiness" occurs but once, and it can hardly be claimed that it refers directly to the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says in Romans 1:4 that as Christ on the human side was of the seed of David, so on the Divine side He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." It was not the Holy Spirit that the Apostle evidently had in mind, but our Lord's human spirit distinguished by holiness and conquering the powers of death. Elsewhere the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead is attributed to the Holy Spirit; and even if it be the quality of our Lord's own Spirit that made it "impossible that He should be holden of death," the human spirit was equipped, sanctified, and kept by the Divine Spirit. The phrase, however, reaches further than the Resurrection, and implies that, by the Spirit of Holiness, men are sanctified in truth. His work is to glorify Christ and sanctify the saints, making holy the Body of Christ which is His Church.

What is Holiness?

It is unfortunate that the term has ceased to attract even good people. There are many who regard it with suspicion, and some who dismiss it with scorn. It is not uncommon for it to be made the butt of cheap wit and the subject of some doubtful stories. This is all the more surprising because of the emphasis with

which the New Testament insists upon its necessity, urges its experience, and enforces its obligations. There is little teaching and testimony on the subject, and, therefore, there is dense ignorance and much misunderstanding. The subject is generally dismissed without inquiry, but even among those who take the trouble to think there is much misapprehension, and the reason is that due attention is not given to the place and work of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the Believer. He is the Sanctifier.

The meaning of holiness must be interpreted "according to the Scriptures." It has a Biblical content and value. It is no use to search for it in pagan literature, however classical, for the Biblical idea of holiness is not to be found elsewhere. Even in Israel it was of slow growth, and the idea passed through many stages before it took its complete and final form. Its root meaning is separation, and it was used of things dedicated to religious uses. Then God was conceived of as separate in majesty and apart in character, and holiness was ascribed to Him and His ways. This quality in God demanded a like quality in His people, and to His covenanted people He said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." He chose them to be "unto Him a holy people." For this purpose He called them out from among the nations. They were to be unto Him "a peculiar people" in whom all men should see a holy and sanctified people. Holiness had its positive as well as its negative side. They were to be distinguished by moral and spiritual excellence as well as by ceremonial and national distinctions. Holiness is an experience as well as an attitude, a life as well as a separation. Their separation unto God was to be manifest in their likeness to Him. The supreme revelation and standard are in Jesus Christ. He revealed the Holy Father and made manifest the Holy Spirit, thereby making known in both God and man the Spirit of Holiness.

Believers are called unto holiness. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "God chose you from the beginning in sanctification of the Spirit." Without holiness grace fails in its purpose, and without it no man can see the Lord. The experience is set forth in various terms and under many forms, but in all its manifold representations the same root ideas persist and prevail. Holiness is an attitude of dedication and an experience of grace in which the heart is cleansed from sin and made perfect in love.

Misapprehensions About Holiness

There is a strange mistake abroad that holiness is something quite optional. It is regarded as desirable for certain people and in special circumstances, but its claims are by no means universal. The preachers sometimes speak of it as an alternative way to Heaven, but as both ways get there, the routes do not really matter. Holiness is regarded as an emotional luxury, if not as a spiritual fad. Its claims are deemed to be emotional rather than ethical, optional rather than imperative. There is little exposition of its character, and still less insistence upon its urgency; consequently, few seek to enter into the experience or take seriously the solemn words of Holy Scripture. Many take it for granted that if it is necessary it will come to them in due course without any concern of theirs. Such slackness accounts for much of the backsliding among believers. The Christian calling is one that demands "all diligence" and "earnest heed." Those who fail to seek after holiness "fall short of the grace of God," give opportunity to "the roots of bitterness to spring up," and become secular and worldly, like Esau, who bartered his spiritual inheritance for material good.

Another mistake made by many earnest Christians about holiness is that it comes by a gradual growth in grace and a steady progress of spiritual discipline. They are always growing toward it, but they never get into it, always struggling and striving to attain, but never entering into possession. The positive expectation is always seen to be afar off, and they die without having possessed. The hopeful future never becomes the positive now. The time never comes that calls for a definite step and a positive act of faith But holiness

does not come by growth; neither is it identified with growth. Growth is a process of life; holiness is the gift of abundant life. Growth is the result of health; holiness is health. Holiness implies a crisis, a new experience, a transformed life. It is not an achievement or an attainment, but a gift of grace in the Holy Ghost. It comes not by works, but of faith.

Not a few good people mix up things that differ. They confuse cleaning with maturity, motive with achievement, love with blamelessness, and the perfection of grace with the perfection of the resurrection glory. People who ought to know blunder hopelessly over these things. Perhaps the confusion that is most common and most senseless is that which persists in associating perfection with finality. There are many people who seem to be afraid lest they should come to a point at which there will be no more room for improvement. They need not distress themselves, even their best friends being judges; but really such shallow and foolish thinking is without excuse. Love never exhausts its inheritance or reaches its limit in being made perfect. Health never hinders growth. The perfection of efficiency is surely not final but primary. No doctrine of the Bible has been stated with greater care, and if any man wills to possess he need not err as to the way.

Holiness Through the Spirit

The Scriptural method of sanctification is through the personal work of the Spirit of God. The law of the Spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death. It is God's work wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit who makes Christ our sanctification. There are diversities of operation in all the works of the Spirit, and the method of entering into possession was manifold as the temperaments and conditions of human life. No two experiences are ever really alike. Generally there is an awakening of heart and mind in which there comes vision and persuasion. There is a conviction of need and a revelation of grace, a hunger and a search, a process and a crisis, an act of faith, and an assurance of cleansing. It is as distinctly a second work of grace as regeneration is a New Birth. Consecration is as practical as repentance, and sanctification as definite as regeneration. Unbelief stumbles at a name, and the heart shrinks from a crisis that involves a death and a resurrection. Satan multiplies difficulties, and an evil heart backs him. The way of life must be sought in the Holy Word and by the Holy Spirit, and the twofold guide will not fail those who seek with all their heart.

Holiness is in the spirit and of the Divine Spirit. It is not in forms and ordinances, not in "will worship and voluntary humility." It is not in prohibitions and self-denial. It is a spirit, a life, a principle, a dynamic. The Spirit of God indwells the spirit of man. He clothes Himself with man, and man is clothed in the presence and power of the Spirit. The Body is the Temple of the Spirit. Christ lives in men through the Spirit. He is no longer a model but a living Presence. Christian faith does not copy Him; it lives Him. Christ is not imitated, but reproduced. Life is sanctified because He possesses it, lives it, transforms it. The Spirit of God does not work upon us; He lives in us. This is the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Works are by the sweat of man's brow; fruit is God's gift to man. Fruit does not come by toil but by appropriation, assimilation, and abiding. Holiness makes life fruitful because it abides in the Living Word and gives free scope to the Spirit of Life. The Spirit of Holiness makes the heart clean, the mind true, the faculties fit, and the life fruitful, by making His holiness ours.

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