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A GUIDE TO HOLINESS IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

"Holiness becometh thine house, a Lord, for ever" (Psalm 93: 5).

Holiness For Times Like These is the theme of this Convention. What a timely theme!

The object of this Convention is not to proclaim the discovery of a new truth nor to re-establish in the church a lost doctrine. Holiness is not on trial. We are not here to interrogate its validity.

I believe it is our purpose to kindle anew the flames of fire contained in this timeless truth in our own lives that has rested in the heart of a Holy God from those pre-creation ages when the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep.

My topic seems to suggest that I am expected to objectively explore the Scriptures on Bible Holiness and translate them into the practical experience of everyday living.

As I see it, the fundamental problem with which I am expected to deal is the question: Can the doctrine of holiness go beyond the theory stage? Can it be brought from the laboratory of the Bible and be translated into human experiences, and can this interpretation through human experience reproduce the Christ-image in every circumstance of life?

I shall not attempt to tell you what Bible Holiness is or what it is not. I shall not attempt to prove that it is a fact or fallacy. This question was settled in those far-off millenniums while the history of man was being formed in the womb of the ageless past.

Just as the Bible does not attempt to prove that there is a God, it does not attempt to prove the fact of holiness. Holiness is the bedrock of eternal truth and its practicality is underscored by the holy lives of the uncounted thousands of just men made perfect, who through holiness of conduct and character, chiseled their righteousness in the flinty rocks of bygone ages so indelibly that it will outlast time and shine in undimmed brilliance through all eternity.

Bible Holiness begs for application, not for experimentation. It cries for amplification, not for examination. In a word, we are here to lift a united voice in proclaiming the glorious message that has thundered down to us from the ceaseless ages of yesteryear and to echo again and again to unborn generations of tomorrow that the sin question has long since been settled once and for all.

When Jesus suffered without the gates, ripping asunder the holy veil, He opened up in the house of David a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and settled the sin question forever.

It has been estimated that from Moses to Calvary, one million lambs were offered by the priests on the altars of Israel, to lift the curse of a broken law and expiate a nation's sin.

It is believed that the high priest entered the Holy of Holies between five hundred and a thousand times and offered the blood of a spotless lamb. Yet, in spite of the blood-letting of innocent

lambs for a thousand years, the nation still reeked in sin and came back again and again bowed down beneath the weight of a universal guilt, because the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin.

The bleating lambs and the lowing cattle for many ages mingled their dying groans with the sighs of wailing men and women and boys and girls. Their cries rose like a melancholy death dirge to the throne of God.

But one day, this ceaseless importunity turned the keys of mercy in the locks of the golden gates, and God Almighty rose up and sent into this hell-bent world that one spotless Lamb, whose precious sinless blood alone, shed upon the hot rocks beneath an Old Rugged Cross, satisfied divine justice and reconciled a world to God. Through His supreme sacrifice, the great Paschal Lamb made not only His body, but His soul, an offering for sin, and put away sin in its totality.

While men wept and waited for that day, the rumbling wheels of time rolled slowly on. Nations rose and fell, dynasties were created and destroyed, kingdoms were built and toppled, and for long ages, the moral and spiritual achievement of the people remained in a kind of static state, constantly jeopardized and shackled beneath the curse of a broken law.

But in those tiring and trying centuries, a flicker of light would often stab the night, because ever and anon some of those Old Testament worthies would rise above the established economy of their day and cry like Job among the ashes, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," or like Abraham, standing among the rocks and brambles of Moriah's rugged heights in life's darkest hour, "My

Son, God will provide himself a lamb" (Genesis 22:8).

Or like Isaiah, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Even like old silver-tongued Balaam, (God made him tell it), "There shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24: 17).

Then John the Baptist on Jordan's Banks: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3: 12).

The Old Testament saints lived amid the ritual and ceremony, but by faith they reached out into the future and laid hold upon the reality of perfect holiness. They even saw the day when the God of Peace would sanctify men holy and that their whole soul, spirit and body would be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

My text is taken from Romans 8: 3, 4. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The Apostle is acknowledging here the eternal existence of the law. He is, secondly, acknowledging a weakness in the effectiveness of that law. Always the law fell short of that ultimate objective. Paul is also declaring unequivocally and

without doubt that there is something else needed, and that something else has been provided. That something else is Jesus Christ, coming on the scene in the form of sinful flesh, and because He knew no sin, and because there was "no guile found in his mouth," He was able to accomplish in absolute totality everything that the law could not do in that it was weak.

Christ is evaluating and defending the law at once. A broad application here would say that the law includes every effort on the part of God Almighty from the original estrangement to reestablish the God-image in Adam's fallen race from the promise in Genesis 3: 15 to Calvary's bloody brow.

Christ was not just talking of the civil law. He did not have in mind only the ceremonial law. He was speaking primarily of the moral law embodied in the Ten Commandments. The civil and ceremonial law had a post-creation beginning, but the moral law did not have its origin among the thundering heights of Sinai.

Long before the flowers bloomed and the birds sang in Eden's holy precincts, the moral law rested like a glittering shaft of justice in the heart of a Triune God.

Jesus Christ had no quarrel with the moral law. He never abrogated one iota of that immutable Magna Charta. The Apostle is not saying here that the Law was an imperfect document. . .for the "Law was holy, and just, and good." But because of the weakness of human flesh and the inherent carnal nature transmitted to Adam's posterity, mankind was unable to meet the demands of a broken law. The law was perfect. The breakdown came in the application. Something else was necessary. The flaw was not in the law,

but in the flesh. Therefore, the flesh had to reckon with the law. The law could not bend. The law could not bow. The law was not flexible. Help had to come from some other source. A man was needed, a man of flesh and blood, a sinless man, a holy man, a man that the law could not touch.

Job saw through a glass darkly what was needed. He said in essence, "God is not a man that I can get to him. . . when I start toward him, I run into the law. What I need," he said, "is a DAYSMAN WHO CAN LAY HIS HAND UPON US BOTH." This human need was to find its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice. He came, validating the experience of every sanctified man from righteous Abel to the last saint who went to Paradise before Jesus died.

In the Old Testament, every time the unclean man brought his offering to the priest at the time of the morning sacrifice, the Priest officiated and sent the man away with these words: "Now don't forget, you will be unclean until the evening." Why not pronounce him clean immediately? He must wait until the time of the evening sacrifice.

Jesus was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice, but He died at the time of the evening sacrifice. It was not until three o'clock in the evening that the righteous dead who waited had their faith rewarded and their experience forever validated.

Christ never abrogated any Old Testament provision without replacing it with a better one. All that preceded Calvary were but tutors and-instructors. "For the law was the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

Christ came in the form of sinful flesh, and for sin destroyed sin in the flesh. If Calvary did not destroy the carnal nature, it was an utter failure

and God subjected His Son to a ruthless ignominy that beggars all description. If Calvary did anything at all, it crucified the old man of sin.

"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. . . . Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2: 10-14).

Every man, if he is worth his salt, must believe in something. He must also be against something. He must believe in something enough to live for it, and if need be, to die for it.

There are some things that I believe in enough to die for. I believe in holiness. I believe in sanctification as a second, definite work of grace. I believe its basic work is to destroy the carnal nature, but I also believe that crisis experience is only the grand beginning into the marvelous development of the sanctified life of love, joy, peace, longsuffering and a thousand other Christian graces which are conspicuous by their absence in many proponents of sanctification. Sanctification opens ten thousand tributaries of life-giving water to quench the thirst of a dying world.

A man usually testifies to what he believes. Let's call on the witness stand a few people whose belief blessed the world and ask them what they believe about holiness:

Let's ask *George Bennard*, writer of "The Old Rugged Cross." He answers:

*"In the Old Rugged Cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that Old Cross, Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me."*

William Cowper, what do you think of Holiness?

*"The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain
in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."*

Augustus Toplady, tell us of your experience.

*"Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Let me hide myself in thee.
Let the Water and the Blood
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath, and make me pure."*

Let's ask *F. M. Graham* about the Sanctified Life. He replies,

*"I used to grow nervous, impatient, and pout
When things would not go just my way,
But now things are different. I look up and shout
For Jesus is in me to stay."*

*"I knelt at the Cross where His blood was applied
The blood that eradicates sin,
And there the dear Saviour my soul sanctified,
And gave me the witness within."*

*"Since then I've been marching with triumphant tread
Through Canaan's rich fruit-bearing clime,*

*For self has been slain and the OLD MAN IS DEAD,
And victory is mine all the time."*

In settling the sin question, Christ accomplished the impossible. It was a case pure and simple of "transferred guilt and imputed righteousness." It is impossible for one man to literally take the guilt of another, but that is what Jesus Christ did. My guilt was transferred from me to Him. I became free and He took my guilt.

Then comes the grandest truth-He imputed His righteousness unto me. That is more than to transfer. In a sense, Jesus Christ recreates a nature within me where the carnal nature was Christ liveth in me.

He took my guilt and imputed unto me His justification.
He took my sin and imputed unto me His holiness.

He took my transgression and imputed unto me His forgiveness.

He took my iniquity and imputed unto me His purity.

He took my rags and imputed unto me His righteousness.

He took my infirmity and imputed unto me His grace.

I gave up my old tattered garments, and He gave me a robe of white. I believe that in the work of Calvary, the world is crucified unto me and I am crucified unto the world.

In Hebrews 2: 11, the Apostle Paul writes, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

As a result of this union, Christ is not ashamed to be seen with them. He is not ashamed to

associate with them; in fact, He is not ashamed to call them His brethren.

There is one thing we had better remember, and that is that we are more than just Pentecostals. We are Holiness and Pentecostal people; and we Pentecostals, whether we be Church of God, Pentecostal Holiness, or of some other denomination, had better never forget that over sixty-five years ago, our founding fathers climbed up off of the shoulders of holy, sanctified men into the mighty Pentecostal Revival that has swept this world like a forest fire. To sidestep this bedrock of entire sanctification in this day of subtle compromise, is to disgrace the honor and the glory of those holy men and women who through self-denial and sacrifice laid the mudsills upon which our great churches are built.

I would not dare minimize the glory of the Pentecostal experience. But we are faced with the fact that the word Pentecost is becoming a rather respectable term among the high-toned ecclesia of this day.

But the stigma of holiness has never been lifted, and the popularity of that doctrine has gained no prominence among the worldly-minded Christians across the passing generations. Holiness still bears a reproach, and carries with it a certain stigma that we cringe from to this very hour.

Pentecost fell inside Jerusalem not far from the Temple among the respectable people, but the sin question was settled without the gates on a place called "the skull" - out there between two thieves - out there among the scum of the city - out there among the stench of human blood and ignominy and shame, suffering and death. That's why there is still a stigma attached to Holiness. But don't forget that the Apostle said in

Hebrews 13:12: "Wherefore, Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." There are no shortcuts. We must go by Calvary to get to the Upper Room.

Holiness is the doctrine above all others that a man cannot preach unless he has gone out there and died with Jesus and left the Old Man nailed to His cross and come forth walking in newness of life. Of all the themes that a man preaches, none can be more out of character than a man who tries to preach holiness, and doesn't have the experience, and doesn't live it.

The devil cannot imitate a holy life. He cannot get the experience and he cannot live it. He can do anything in the realm of religion but live holy. That rare distinction is reserved for sanctified men and women alone. Not even angels have that honor on this earth.

It is more than significant that these two great denominations in deliberative councils mutually arrived at a "moment of truth" and have come together to re-echo the doctrine of Bible Holiness, back to all the past ages, "Like deep calling to deep" and say to all those sainted souls from righteous Abel to this crisis hour that the waste and weight of years, the skeptics and the modernists, the doubters and the dogooders, the cynics and the shortcutters, the Sanballats and Tobiahs, the compromisers and the formalizers, the fanatics and the heretics, the come-outers and the independents, the stay-inners and the deadheads, have not been able to tarnish the bright truth of holiness, but like two mighty armies in battle array, the *Church of God* and the *Pentecostal Holiness Church* join hands and hearts and voices to

lift high the blazing torch of heart purity in time's darkest hour. We will wave it till every man has heard, until every dark corner of the earth has been stabbed with the flame of light, we will shout it from the housetops, we will sing it till the heavens ring with this ageless and changeless truth of holiness.

I believe that as long as one of us can stand on our feet and speak, that Christ will have a witness and holiness shall never perish from the earth.

*When first I heard of Holiness I thought it must be right,
It seemed to fit the Bible and be the Christian's light.
I went to a Camp Meeting to hear them preach and sing
They seemed to preach the Bible and make the welkin ring.*

*I little thought of joining, I said I could not stand
To be among the people that's called the Holy Band.
The world looked down upon them and said they were
so rash,
They often spoke against them and said they were but
trash.*

*My heart began to hunger and thirst and burn within
I wanted full salvation and freedom from all sin.
I went to God for Holiness and called upon His Name,
He cleansed my heart completely and filled me with
the same.*

*And now I'm one that bears that name, that happy
holy band;
I've crossed the River Jordan and entered Canaan
Land.*

*The atmosphere is pleasant, there's fruit of ev'ry kind,
When you reach heaven's portal, I'll not be far behind.*

*We'll sing until we die, we will preach and testify
We'll preach the way of Holiness so true.*

*We'll sing until we die, we will preach and testify
Till our precious loving Saviour's face we view.*