

The Inner Life of Holiness

by Dougan Clark

The inner life of holiness is a life of faith, characterized by a continuous and steadfast faith, and a high degree of faith, which regulates the appetites, propensities, and affections.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Romans 12:1, Galatians 5:24, Hebrews 11:6, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Inner Holiness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Dougan Clark preaches about the inner life of holiness, emphasizing the importance of faith, trust, consecration, and the regulation of our desires and emotions. He highlights that faith grows through exercise and habit, leading to a deep trust in God's promises and blessings. The inner life of holiness involves surrendering to God, believing in His faithfulness, and continuously submitting to His will. It also entails regulating our emotions and desires in alignment with God's law, allowing the indwelling Spirit to bring harmony and peace within us.

Transcript

The inner life of holiness is, as remarked in a former chapter, pre-eminently a life of faith. There are other phases of this subject that it is important to present. The life of trust implies a continuous and a steadfast faith. It also implies a very high degree of faith, or what is called by Paul, and by certain uninspired writers, "the full assurance of faith." The Christian begins to live by faith, and his spiritual vitality is increased and strengthened in direct proportion to the increase and strengthening of his faith. And thus when faith becomes perfect, love becomes perfect, and the inner life of holiness is also the inner life of faith

Now faith, like other principles of the human mind, such as memory, perception and reasoning, increases by exercise. It is to some extent at least influenced by the law of habit. This law is whatever we do frequently or persistently becomes comparatively easy.

Now in the inner life of holiness it becomes the holy habit of the soul to trust in God -- to believe His promises -- to appropriate with thankfulness all His blessings, both spiritual and temporal, as they are showered down from above day by day, and to expect them to continue. Such a soul knows what it is to rest in Jesus. And if any Christian heart is not resting, it is because it is not believing.

The inner life of holiness is free from all agitating and disquieting reasonings. Not that faith -- even reckless faith -- is unreasonable, or contrary to reason. No, far from it. But the sanctified man has learned that it is the most reasonable thing in the world to believe God. He has learned that his "doubts are

traitors" and therefore when he has once planted his feet upon the sure promises of God, he refuses to be driven from his position by the suggestions of natural reason, which attaches itself to what is seen and temporal, while faith, on the contrary, attaches itself to what is unseen and eternal.

The language of the holy soul is, "Let God be true, but every man a liar, " and "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Faith is never opposed to true and right reason, although it may be beyond it. As reason is paramount in the sphere of reason, so must faith be paramount in the sphere of faith. The two principles occupy each its own territory, and neither should infringe upon the other's rights. There need be and should be no quarrel between them. When rightly understood and rightly exercised they are in perfect harmony.

The mystical writers distinguished between meditation and contemplation -- regarding the former as a voluntary active exercise of the perceptive and rational faculties, and the latter as a passive condition of the soul in which it just receives the thoughts and communications which God originates. "The ship's navigation ceases," says Molinos, "when it enters the port." Thus the soul after the fatigue of meditation, finding itself in the calm of contemplation, a state of mind resulting from the highest faith, ought to quit all its own reasoning, and remain peaceful and silent with its eye fixed simply and affectionately upon God." Do not the possessors of the inner life of holiness know something of this blessed experience even in our day?

But if the life under consideration is a life of faith, it is no less certainly a life of consecration. As an act of faith is necessary to the reception on our part of the experience of holiness, so also a previous act of consecration is necessary in order to bring us on believing ground. We must surrender in order that we may believe, and we must believe in order that we may be holy. And as consecration and faith are necessary for the obtaining of entire sanctification they are necessary for the retaining of it as well. The inner life of holiness, therefore, is characterized by a continuous surrender and a continuous trust. We must yield, we must trust, we must obey and that perpetually.

compared by the Saviour to plucking out the right eye: to cutting off the right hand: to laying down the natural life and such most truly it is in relation to sin, and in relation to worldly pleasures and worldly things. It implies a surrender that is absolute, unconditional, unreserved and for all future duration. The greatest struggle is usually in the final definite act to surrender in which we place ourselves and all our interests implicitly in God's hands, and enter into covenant that we will be, do and suffer all that He requires of us.

But after the one formal definite act of consecration, there will be, most likely, in our experience many unexpected tests of obedience and surrender; many questions which we had not looked for or thought of when we first gave up all to God. And the continuous daily inner life will therefore be a continuous daily submission to God, with the language expressed or implied "Thy will, not mine be done." And this will also become more and more easy by frequent repetition until there will be scarcely, if at all, even the consciousness of a struggle in this perpetually yielding ourselves in all things to His sweet will. To substitute His will for our own will at length becomes our highest delight.

The inner life of holiness is further characterized by the complete subjection and regulation of the appetites, propensities and affections. All these sensibilities of our nature, are in themselves under proper restrictions, innocent -- but in man's fallen condition they have all been corrupted by sin. And in his unregenerate state the human being is of ten enslaved by these desires which God gave him for a good purpose. Instead of subjecting them, he is subjected by them. Under the influence of inbred sin the normal

desire for food degenerates into gluttony and drunkenness -- the proper conjugal attraction which brings opposite sexes together in wedded love becomes gross licentiousness -- the social principle becomes excessive or perverted -- the lawful desire for happiness becomes excessive and makes too much of personal happiness regardless of the happiness of others -- self-love becomes selfishness -- the proper desire for knowledge becomes idle curiosity -- the lawful wish to accumulate becomes sinful covetousness -- the right desire of life perverted into a slavish fear of death on the one hand, or into a reckless disregard of danger on the other.

But the inner life of holiness regulates all these sensibilities and keeps each in its proper place and its proper exercise. All the disorderly passions which arise out of the excessive or perverted action of the propensities are quelled and calmed by the indwelling Spirit, and brought into happy union and harmony with the law of God.

Some thoughtful writer has remarked that the hardest principles to regulate in the human heart are anger and love. This is probably correct. There are too few certainly who know how to be angry and sin not -- and too few who know how to love purely, rightly, unselfishly and holly. But in the inner life of holiness there is no sinful anger and there is no sinful love.

And yet the sanctified man or woman must abhor that which is evil. There is an indignation, yea, an anger which is righteous and of the same kind as that which the Saviour felt as He beheld the wickedness and hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. But it is a delicate matter for a Christian to be angry at all, lest the element of selfish vindictiveness and unholy resentment may enter into and spoil the righteousness indignation of his wrathful soul.

And again, how blessed it is to love aright. Not that the Christian or even the holy Christian, is required to love all people alike -- not that we are required to like everybody -- as we are required to love everybody. But it is our privilege and duty to love all men with a right and appropriate love and this will be only possible when we love God supremely and love our fellow-men in God and for God. That is to say, when we recognize in every human being the image of God however much marred by sin, and love them with a love which desires their welfare and salvation.

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