

# Ecstatic Feelings

by Harmon A. Baldwin

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*The sermon discusses the idea that ecstatic feelings are not a necessary measure of a person's spiritual state, and that true sanctification and soul victory can be experienced even in the midst of trials and temptations.*

**Scripture:** Job 23:10, Malachi 4:2, Matthew 4:1, 1 Corinthians 2:14, James 1:12

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Spiritual Victory"

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## Description

Harmon A. Baldwin discusses the concept of the Sun of Righteousness always shining on the holy man, emphasizing that while clouds of trials and temptations may temporarily obscure one's consciousness of God's presence, the sanctified individual can still experience inner light and victory through faith. Baldwin challenges the notion that continual mountain-top ecstasies are inseparable from a pure heart, highlighting the importance of soul victory and obedience to God's will as true triumph in Christ, regardless of earthly circumstances. He concludes by affirming that living a holy life involves detecting and resisting temptations, maintaining purity of heart even in the face of adversities.

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## Transcript

Another ambiguous statement is that the sun is always shining (meaning ecstatic blessings) in the holy man's sky. We sing,

"Here the sun is always shining

Here the sun is always bright;

'Tis no place for gloomy Christians to abide

For my soul is filled with music,

And my heart with great delight,

And I'm living on the hallelujah side."

There is no doubt that the Sun of Righteousness is always shining, and that the holy man always resides under His healing rays and is a constant partaker of His beneficent influences, but it is also a fact that the holy man must pass through clouds. These clouds need not, and if the man keeps holy they will not succeed in intercepting the power of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, yet they may temporarily

intercept one's consciousness of these rays, and then the holy man sings,

"I oft pass through tunnels that seem dark as night,"

and it is possible that for the time being he may lose sight of even the inner light. Job had such an experience, but he said, "When Thou hast tried me, I will come forth as gold."

While Wesley strongly accuses Madam Guyon for teaching that God at times withdraws the consciousness of His presence and favor even from the soul that is cleansed, and says some good things about God not playing bo-peep with His children, yet, on the other hand, he admits the possibility of strong temptations clouding, temporarily, the work of God.

But does not sanctification shine by its own light? And does not the new birth, too? Sometimes it does; and so does sanctification; at others it does not. In the hour of temptation Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness., without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist.

We once heard a holiness preacher make the statement at the head of this chapter in substance, and then consume fifteen or twenty minutes in endeavoring to reconcile some of the Bible facts about trials, afflictions, heaviness, etc., with his unbiblical premise. We concluded that it was a hard job to split hairs close enough to bolster up a statement which contradicts both the Bible and every-day experience. While a man may always rejoice in the facts of redemption and personal participation in its merits, yet it is a question whether a person can be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and at the same time feel the ecstasy of joy that he does when the heaviness is removed. We once heard of a good brother who was subject to seasons of great temptation and pressure. After enduring for some time he would begin to shout. When asked why he shouted, he replied, "I am shouting to think how good I will feel when I get out of this." Some of you folks who are so often overtaken by temptation might try that for a while.

But some testify that it is an actual fact that "a cloud does arise to darken their skies." This is good, and we rejoice with such persons with exceeding joy; but when these persons insist in making their experiences a standard by which to measure all others, and harshly accuse the ones who suffer either mental or spiritual depression while under a stress of temptation or physical disability, we wish to register our humble objection. We have heard people loudly boast of their unclouded joys, and undisturbed serenity, reproaching those who did not reach the same standard; and then we have seen these same persons in the furnace, and have decided -- well, we are all human after all, even though we may be sanctified. It is not the amount of ecstasy which I enjoy that measures my grace, but the amount of victory I have in the midst of trials.

On the same line, some say that the sanctified, and some that even the justified, live a triumphant life. The Bible says that God "always causes us to triumph in Christ" (1 Cor. 2:14). If the reader will turn to this passage and read the context, he will find that the triumph of which the apostle speaks is along two lines, personal soul victory and success in preaching the gospel; there is no suggestion of the continual mountain-top ecstasies which some would have us believe are inseparable from a pure heart.

Doubtless, if one lives right, these soul thrills will come, and, perhaps, the nearer to God he lives the oftener they will come and the more glorious they will be; but the hundreds, yea, thousands that have fallen by the way because they did not continually feel the ecstatic triumphs that they were made to

believe they should have, are witness to the error of such teaching and the need of a warning voice.

Do you have soul victory? Do you do God's bidding? If so you "triumph in Christ," no matter how heavy the burdens, or how gloomy your earthly prospects. George Nitsch says,

We can not have heaven twice; and that is how a chain of anxiety and trouble is woven into our happiness; and that is the reason Christ's kisses are so scarce, and His visits so rare. But when we come together above the sun and the moon, then we will experience the full riches of His love, which He will pour out upon us to all eternity.

This is soul triumph -- to live a holy life.

Again, we are told that there are no movements in the clean soul in response to temptation. A second thought would surely show the error of such a statement for, if the temptation is detected and repelled there must of necessity be a movement of opposition. The response of righteous indignation is aroused at hearing the name of that God whom the soul adores blasphemed, or at the sight of vice and guilt outraging virtue and innocency.

If, in place of saying there is no response to temptation, we should say there is no agreement with temptation, we are correct, provided we except those solicitations which are directed at the natural appetites and desires which remain in the nature of even the sanctified. The devil tried this latter method with Jesus when he suggested that Jesus turn stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. There was a desire for food, and doubtless a desire to which the suggestion could appeal, but since at that special time, the working of the miracle to satisfy the desire for food would have been obedience to the devil, Jesus rejected it immediately. Thus when our natural appetites are aroused and solicited grace detects the enemy's ruse and overcomes. No sin is committed and the heart remains pure.

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