

# Various Statements

by Harmon A. Baldwin

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*The sermon discusses various misconceptions about sanctification, including the idea that doubts forfeit experience and that gain and godliness are parallel.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:25, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 1:6

**Topics:** "Faith And Doubt", "Sanctification"

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## Description

Harmon A. Baldwin addresses the issue of doubts in one's spiritual standing, emphasizing that honest doubts do not necessarily mean forfeited grace. He highlights the importance of continually acting in faith upon the promises of the gospel to maintain purity, especially for those who have been sanctified. Baldwin cautions against forced repetitions in testimonies and the pressure to always mention sanctification, as it can lead to weariness and discouragement. He also challenges the notion that financial prosperity is a sign of godliness, sharing examples of individuals who faced poverty yet maintained strong faith and victory.

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## Transcript

One person (and he is one of a large class) declares with great earnestness and conviction, "If you doubt your experience you have lost it already, and need to be at the altar." While we will concede that doubts generally have "legs to stand on," yet we will not concede that an honest doubt as to one's standing is a sure sign of forfeited grace.

"To retain perfect purity," says James Caughey, "requires a continual acting of faith upon the leading promises of the gospel. \* \* \* The temptations to doubt concerning one's purity are much more intricate and perplexing than those regarding the forgiveness of sins. The most holy and devoted persons are more frequently compelled to approach the cleansing blood by faith, -- for the evidence of purity than for that of pardon." Then he quotes from Lady Maxwell: "I have often acted faith for sanctification in the absence of all feeling, and it has always diffused an indescribable sweetness through my soul."

But some one asks, If a doubt concerning one's standing does not of necessity forfeit the experience, then what is the doubt that does? We answer, The condition the sanctified soul is in when he hesitates concerning his standing is that of a man surrounded by numerous and bloodthirsty enemies, hesitating as to which weapon to use, his knife, club, or gun; or a mariner in a fog attempting to determine by compass the direction in which his ship is headed. Hesitancy as to personal duty or standing is not distrust of God. May we illustrate the doubt that overcomes the soul? A sister testified that she made the discovery that

she had lost the experience of holiness. In casting about for the reason for this loss she remembered that some time before in the midst of sore pressure the enemy had suggested, God is not able to keep you. To this suggestion she gave assent, and her experience was gone. One will readily see that this was a distrust of God, and such distrust is inconsistent with a fully cleansed heart.

Another person gives us to understand that every time we testify we must say something about sanctification, and that if we do not we will forfeit the grace. Many persons, because of such teachings, have been so tempted over a failure to say, "Saved and sanctified," that they have thrown away the grace already attained, and fainted by the way.

A constant forced repetition of the most precious facts is apt to cause weariness and it may be discouragement. We once read of a woman who was impressed that she must under all circumstances keep saying, "Praise the Lord." After weeks of this constant exercise, she grew discouraged and lost out.

We lay it down as a fact that there is a blessed variety in the personal leadings of the Holy Ghost, and that if we follow Him in our testimonies no two will be alike and no trite expression will mar the beauty of their originality or of their inspiration. For one, the writer must confess that he has often during a love-feast been perfectly captivated by the testimonies, sparkling with originality and saturated with the Spirit.

Another declares that if persons are back of the clearest light ever given, if they are not walking unerringly in all the will of God, their grace is all gone, they are backslidden. If the persons who make this statement refer to actual sin against known light, there is no room to question their accuracy, but, strictly speaking, if this claim is true a man's grace is forfeited every time he fails to pray as much or as often as he should, every time he eats a piece of pie after he feels he has had enough, or every time he speaks an unnecessary word; for are not all these contrary to his highest light?

Again, how do people generally backslide, gradually or suddenly? The consensus of opinion is that it is a little neglect here, an unnecessary word there, a little self-indulgence in another place, until the strength is gradually gone, and then, when the crucial test comes, the soul is not able to stand. The first neglect is a backward step. Although none can tell how far this may proceed without actual backsliding, yet it is an error to place that point earlier than facts warrant, or on the contrary, to presume on the longsuffering of the Lord.

Another person says that if our hearts are clean, and we properly trust God, we will never reach the bottom of the flour barrel, and thus seems to teach that gain and godliness are parallel. They attempt to prove their point by quoting David's words, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." But one greater than David speaks of a certain beggar who was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, after he had died full of sores and befriended only by dogs. If David never saw a saint in want, well and good; but Jesus Christ had, and I have also.

But this is the actual experience of some, they have never known want, and because they have not they would blame those who have (like Job's friends) with lack of grace or a carelessness, that is little short of criminal, on financial lines. The writer once heard a minister take this stand in a camp meeting sermon, and then proceed to testify that all his temporal wants had been supplied, he had never scraped the bottom of the flour barrel, etc. After the service we approached a brother, well-beloved in the church, and ventured the statement that we could not give such a testimony. The good brother replied, "That man has not been where you have." That's just it. We once knew a brother, who, because of a lack of means, did without meat or butter for two years at a time; he fed his family on corn meal, hominy and potatoes (when

he could get them,) wore patched clothes, and cut the legs off his trousers and turned them around that the worn knees might not be so prominent, and all the while kept eternal victory and saw souls saved, and was so ignorant he did not know that he was dishonoring God by enduring these things, as he fancied, for the glory of God! Job had just as much grace, and perhaps a little more, when he lost all as when he was surrounded by great riches. Neither riches nor poverty is godliness.

Then there is the extreme divine healer, who says that if you do not get healed you are wrong. There is no possible answer, for these folks know; but may we say that some of the best saints we have ever met were the most afflicted, and some of them even died.

We would not be understood as disparaging the matter of divine healing, we simply refer to those who make a hobby of healing and unchristianize those who are sick. We lay down as a rule: The fact that a person has great faith for healing does not prove that he has either great grace or great love; and the fact that one is able to exercise little faith for healing does not prove that he has little love or grace. These things do not always run parallel. Sickness is an inheritance of the human family, and, sooner or later, all will be overtaken.

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