

God's Desire to Bless the Sinner.

by Horatius Bonar

God desires truth in the inward parts and wants us to be faithful to him, but our refusal leads to condemnation.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 1:18, Jeremiah 13:27, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 22:37, Romans 12:1, James 4:8, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "God's Desire for Faithfulness", "The Call to Repentance"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes God's desire to bless sinners despite their spiritual uncleanness, highlighting humanity's unfaithfulness to God in heart, life, and religion. He urges that God yearns for our loyalty and seeks to cleanse us from our sins, calling us to respond immediately to His loving appeal. Bonar warns of the consequences of refusal, illustrating that many offer mere external worship while withholding their hearts from God. He concludes with a reminder of God's condemnation for unfaithfulness, yet also offers hope through Christ's invitation to come to Him for rest and cleansing.

Transcript

"Woe unto you, O Jerusalem! will you not be made clean? when shall it once be?" - Jeremiah 13:27

Without dwelling on Jerusalem and her apostasy, which this verse specially brings before us, we pass at once to the application of the words to man in general.

I. MAN'S UNCLEANNESS. The uncleanness here spoken of is spiritual, and refers specially to unfaithfulness to God- the soul's lust and lewdness, its preference for another husband, and its desire for another love than that of God. It was with this spiritual adultery that God so often charged Israel and Jerusalem; it is with this he charges the church; and with this the whole race.

We are unfaithful to God!

(1.) IN HEART. It was meant that God should have the first place in the heart. But alas, he has the last, if any place at all. He is shut out from our love. We love others, but not God; the world, but not God; friends, but not God; money, but not God. O man, your heart is false to God; unfaithful in all its movements.

(2.) IN LIFE. As is the heart, so is the life; as is the inner, so is the outer man. God is not in our life. He is excluded from every part; thrust into a corner. Life is devoted to other objects. It is false to him. Word, deed, plan, behavior, business, education; life in all its movements, life in all its enjoyments, is false to God.

(3.) IN RELIGION. A man's religion is often the most untrue and hollow part of his life. In it he is more false to God than in any other of his actings. In religion he professedly comes nearest to God; yet in it he is often farthest away. In it he is like Jerusalem committing spiritual adultery- worshiping false gods, while pretending to worship the true. Such is man in relation to God! All falsehood, unfaithfulness, lewdness. There is no part clean.

II. GOD'S DESIRE THAT WE SHOULD BE CLEAN. He desires truth in the inward parts. He is faithful to us, and he wishes us to be faithful to him. God is not indifferent to our unfaithfulness, as if it mattered not to him. Nor does he treat it as a mere affront, or only as a sin, with which he is angry and which he condemns and will avenge. He needs our heart, our whole undivided heart; he needs it all for himself; he needs to fill it. He is a jealous God.

Moreover he pities us because of the misery which our unfaithfulness brings on us. He sees us gaining nothing, but losing everything by it; and he pities us; he yearns over us; for our own sakes he desires to see us faithful to himself. Such is the God with whom we have to do. He is one who takes a deep and loving interest in our welfare, and who pities us even when he judges us.

III. HIS ADMONITION WITH US. "Will you not be made clean; when shall it once be?" These are earnest words; words of solemn and urgent appeal to us. His pity is not idle. He comes down to us. He speaks to us. He stretches out his hands to us. Will you? Will you not? When shall it be? Shall it not be now? Can words be more energetic, more personal, more explicit and direct? Every man must feel himself spoken to; spoken to most urgently; entreated, besought, expostulated with. He wants us to be cleansed- to turn, to seek his face, to give him our loyal love; he wants this immediately. Not a day to be lost. The time past has been enough, no, too long. He presses us with his solemn, urgent, loving now! No delay, no lingering, no hesitation. Give up your unbelief, and give it up now. Give up your idolatry, and give it up now. Turn to me, and turn now. Love me, and love me now.

IV. OUR REFUSAL. The passage takes for granted our refusal. Man rejects God, refuses to give him his heart- deliberately persists in hypocrisy, insincerity, and unfaithfulness. As much externalism as can be asked he will give; but nothing beyond this. Words he will give, but nothing more. Sacrifices, ceremonies, incense, music, the bended knee, the religious voice and tone; all these he will give, but not the heart. That he deliberately refuses - refuses to love God, to trust God, to obey God, to give God anything but the service of the outer man- of the lip, the knee, the body.

V. GOD'S CONDEMNATION. Woe unto you, O Jerusalem! It was this word that our Lord took up, when he uttered woes against the cities of Galilee. How much is involved in that woe! It is the woe of God! He means what he says. His threats are not empty. He will execute his vengeance in the day of vengeance. Woe to every one that loves not God; that loves the creature better than the creator; that has given his heart to the world in preference to God. Woe to him who is unfaithful to God; who worships him with the outer man but withholds the heart. Woe to him whose religion is all unfaithfulness; who exhibits his dislike of God in those very acts in which he deals with God.

Yet he who utters woe, utters also come (Matthew 11:21,28). And between these two are the sons of men. These are the two words which he sounds aloud to us; making us to feel his profound sincerity and his unutterable love.

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