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GODLINESS

CHAPTER 12: HOLINESS – II

ROMANS 12:1-2 – *"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

WHEN my dear husband was speaking, I was thinking about the word in the text, "that"—"that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." This advances in the Divine life, as well as every other, right to the end, till we advance into glory, has its conditions. The condition of the advance from an absolutely unawakened worldly condition to that of a convicted sinner IS THE RECEPTION OF THE LIGHT. God awakens and enlightens tens of thousands, and thousands reject the light—instantly put it away—shut their eyes will not have the light. These go back into greater darkness, and sin with more alacrity than ever they did before; those who receive the light advance into the condition of awakened, enlightened souls.

The next condition of advance from the state of a struggling sinner, willing to part with his sins and to follow Christ, is faith, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may receive the forgiveness of sins. And every advance onwards, if the believer is ever to get beyond the first principles, if he is ever to grow a single inch, so to speak, there is a condition involved in that advance! For instance, if, after conversion, the Holy Spirit reveals to him something which is inconsistent—which he did not before see the condition of his advance another step is the renunciation of that thing!—the reception of the light, and OBEDIENCE TO IT; and, if he shrinks from and does not receive and obey the light, he will never advance any more until he does. There are thousands of Christians, instead of advancing, have gone back since their conversion, because they would not comply with the condition, "THAT" they might prove the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

There was a condition. They would have proved the will of God if there had been no condition; but there was a condition they would not comply with; so there they stick, just where they were, or, rather, they have gone backward.

Well, now then, here is a condition to this grand and glorious advance from the state of justification, where, while the believer is given power over sin, so that it does not rule over him, yet he sometimes,



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through its inward workings, falls under its power—the advance from this comparatively sinning and repenting condition on to that platform where the believer so abides in Christ that he sins not, that he Loves God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength—so united to Christ that, walking in the power of the Holy Ghost, he fulfills the law of love under which he has placed—the advance, I say, from that up and down, in and out, falling and rising state, to this higher platform, also has its conditions.

You would go up to it today if it were not for the conditions; most of you would go up in a body, as the Israelites would have gone into Canaan, if there had been no condition. I never knew any one so foolish as not to want to be in the good land; they want to be in, of course, and they would go in and get the honey and the milk, but there are the CONDITIONS! Now then, here you have it plain, and you have it in numbers of other passages equally plain.

There is nothing upon which the Holy Ghost has been more particular than in laying down the conditions. And what are they? "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice"—the living man—you, all of you; not IT—something in you.

The latter term is never used by the Holy Ghost when speaking to Christians, but always you, ye, your bodies, your souls, your mind, the whole man—YOU, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." And is it not? Is it too much? Is it more than He bargained for when He bought you? Is it more than He paid for? It is it your reasonable service."

And now comes the condition: "And be NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD: BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, THAT ye may prove."

Oh! if you could be transformed to Him and conformed to this world at the same time, all the difficulty would be over. I know plenty of people who would be transformed directly; but, to be not conformed to this world—how they stand and wince at that! They cannot have it at that price. As dear Finney once said, 'My brother, if you want to find God, you will not find Him up there, amongst all the starch and flattery of hell; you will have to come down for Him.' That is it—"Be not conformed to this world."

Nothing wounds me more, after being at meetings for dealing with souls, where I have tried to speak in a most pointed and thorough way to make everybody know what I meant, to find, when I go



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to the dinner or supper-table, that people have not known a bit, or, if they have, won't accept it. Oh! this is the secret—they will not come down from their pride and high-mightiness. But God will not be revealed to such souls, though they cry and pray themselves to skeletons, and go mourning all their days. They will not fulfil the condition, "Be not conformed to this world;" they will not forego their conformity even to the extent of a dinner-party. A great many that I know will not forego their conformity to the shape of their head-dress. They won't forego their conformity to the extent of giving up visiting and receiving visits from ungodly, worldly, hollow, and superficial people. They will not forego their conformity to the tune of having their domestic arrangements upset—no, not if the salvation of their children, and servants, and friends depends upon it. The *sine qua non* is their own comfort, and then take what you can get, on God's side. 'We must have this, and we must have the other; and then, if the Lord Jesus Christ will come in at the tail end and sanctify it all, we shall be very much obliged to Him; but we cannot forego these things.'

Oh! friends, friends, I tell you, this will never do. God helping me, I will, I must tell you, because it is driven in upon my soul by what I am seeing and hearing every day. People come to these meetings, and they groan and cry and come to us for help, and we exhaust our poor brains and bodies in talking to them and giving them advice, telling them what to do, and, when it comes to the point, we find, 'Oh! no; don't you be mistaken: we are not going to sacrifice these things. We cannot have the Lord if He will not come into our temples and take them as He finds them. We could not forego these things.'

You remember the text that was read at the opening of the meeting—"And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." It means something! and there are a hundred other texts teaching the same truth. Now, WHAT DOES IT MEAN? The Lord help us to see it. Does it not mean that we are not to be like the rest of the world? That we are not to be guided by the same maxims, or act upon the same principles as the world? That we are not to attach the same importance to mere earthly and worldly things that worldly people do? Have you ever thought of those awful words in the parable of the sower? "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, CHOKE the word, and it becometh unfruitful,"—not abominable things, not immoral things not shameful things, but the desire of OTHER things." And, in another text: "Who MIND earthly things." They attach more importance to worldly things and other things than they do to the things of His kingdom. They practically make these things FIRST, though they sing about His kingdom and profess to make Him first: they make the earthly things first, and, therefore, they will not have their earthly things upset for His things; and do you



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suppose He is cheated? Do you suppose He is deceived? Do you think it likely that the great God of Heaven, who has millions of angels and archangels to worship Him, is going to pour His glory on such people, and reveal Himself to them, and use them? Not likely! 'I will be first in your love,' He says.

You women here, if you knew that you were not the first and only one in the affections of your husband, what would you say? And you husbands, would you dwell with a wife if you knew you were not the only one in her affections, but that they were divided between you and someone else? 'Not likely!' you would say; 'I am not going to lavish my affections, and my society, and my gifts, and everything I possess on one whose heart is divided with another. If she will have her heart divided, then she must go to that other.'

Now you know God is a jealous God, and He knows who do mock Him, and He knows who will not sacrifice this conformity to the world that they may walk with Him in white. He knows, also, who do not care what anybody thinks of them, or what people say of them; who are willing to be counted fools and fanatics that they may walk with Him and promote the interests of His kingdom, and who only regard their bodies as His instruments and their homes as His temples; who are willing that their breakfast hours, or dinner hours, or luncheon hours, or any other hours may be upset, and, in fact, everything made subservient to the interests of His Kingdom. We must place everything at His service—our children, business, homes, and everything. If I understand it, that is nonconformity to the world.

Before I close, let me say a word to help those who are desiring to attain this blessing. There is no other way. It is of no use beating about the bush. BE NOT CONFORMED, BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED. These two are in juxtaposition. If you will be conformed, then you cannot be transformed; if you will not be transformed, then you must be conformed. Now, will you give up conformity to the world? If so, you may, every one of you, be transformed this morning—go up into the land. You may all be saved to day, and make your abiding-place in Christ, and have all the power and glory which comes to those who possess Him; you may advance from the miserable condition of a poor up-and-down, in-and-out, wretched man, on to the glorious vantage ground of a saved man—a saved woman—a triumphant saint of God!

FAITH



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My faith looks up to Thee, My faith, so small, so slow; It lifts its drooping eyes to see, And claim the blessing now.

Thy wondrous gift It sees afar; Thy perfect love It claims to share, And doth not, cannot, fear.

My faith takes hold on Thee, My faith, so weak, so faint; It lifts its trembling hands to be, Trembling, but violent.

The kingdom now It takes by force, And waits till Thou, Its last resource, Shall seal and sanctify.

My faith holds fast on Thee, My faith, still small, but sure; Its anchor holds alone to Thee, Whose presence keeps me pure,

And Thou alway, To see and hear, By night, by day, Art very near— Art very near to me.

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