

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. *Hebrews 12:12-13*

HOLINESS

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14

The LORD gave specific instructions concerning the attire that Aaron the high priest over the house of Israel was supposed to wear when he made sacrifices for the people. If he did not wear these garments he could not enter into the Holy of Holies. One of those pieces of attire was a gold plaque which he was to wear on his forehead. *“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”* (Exo 28:36) Paul was aware of this requirement as he admonished the Hebrews.

This particular Greek word which is translated “holiness” in Hebrews 12:14 appears ten times in the NT. Five times it is translated “holiness” and five times it is translated “sanctification.” So it seems rather obvious that these words are interchangeable in their meaning.

That “holiness” which the high priest alone wore into the presence of GOD is typical of the fact that JESUS CHRIST, our GREAT HIGH PRIEST has come into the very presence of GOD in our behalf bringing HIS holiness with HIM. It is because of HIS holiness that we are viewed as Holy in the sight of GOD. *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”* (1 Cor 1:30)

When the scriptures say that *“HE is made unto us”* it is speaking about one of the most glorious subjects in all of the word of GOD; which is the imputation of HIS righteousness unto us. Paul says *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* (2Cor 5:21) Here he speaks of the two aspects of imputation which form the very basis upon which the hope of every child of GOD is based. HE became our SUBSTITUTE, being “made sin for us”, that is our sin was “imputed” to HIM and HIS righteousness was “imputed” to us.

The word “imputed” is an accounting term which literally means “written upon the account.” We have been “reckoned” holy in the sight of GOD because of HIS being our SUBSTITUTE, while at the same time HE was “reckoned” as a “sinner” in our behalf. In reality HE had no sin of HIS own, nor did we possess any holiness. Yet because HE was our SUBSTITUTE, *“mighty to save”*, HE took our sin and gave us HIS righteousness.

We had not the power to accomplish this transaction, nor any means at our disposal to effect this transfer, but HE having united us to HIMSELF in the covenant of grace before the foundation of the world, determined to redeem HIS “kinsmen” by this very act, conceived and decreed by HIS power. *“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that*

calleth.” (Rom 9:11) So in the fullness of time HE was born in “the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin.” (Rom 8:3) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (1Pet 3:18) Thus and forevermore are we adjudicated as “sanctified or holy” in the sight of GOD because of what HE has done for us. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb 10:14)

This is no “make believe” holiness, but a real righteousness which has been “written to our account” and can never be erased. *“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom 11:29) We are “justified” according to the law, because HE has born our penalty and forever set us free from its condemnation. “Free from the law, oh happy condition, JESUS has died, and there is remission.” Nothing can be added nor can anything be taken away from that perfect work which CHRIST has done in our behalf.*

Now as glorious as the imputed righteousness is which is ours by the substitutionary work of CHRIST in our behalf, this is not the “holiness” which Paul is speaking about in his exhortation to the Hebrews here in 12:14. He is here speaking about something that is to be pursued or sought after. It is impossible that we should hope to ever gain “holiness” that might be laid to our account by our own actions, since we are already judged as “perfectly holy” in the sight of GOD by HIS imputed righteousness. No improvement or adjustment can be made to that which is perfect.

Rather he is here speaking about that “holiness” which is the “evidence” of our sonship. It would be most odd that those who are predestined to be conformed to HIS image, should not have any desire to be like HIM in word and deed. In fact the scripture plainly indicates that. *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10) There are many false professors who somehow think that those who are ordained unto good works may or may not be so.*

We are quite aware of the remaining corruption that is in all of those who are yet justified by the imputed righteousness of CHRIST. Paul’s lament in the seventh chapter of Romans is the common experience of the sons of grace, *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” (Rom 7:18-19) Now while we find sin to still be our mighty foe, yet we also have been given a desire to be doing the will of GOD and a desire to be rid of the sin which doth so easily beset us. This is the evidence of the work of HIS SPIRIT within us and upon us causing us “both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure.”*

There is nothing in the scriptures to indicate that any man who does not have a desire unto holiness, has any reason to consider that he is anymore than a stony ground hearer. Grace not only is that which makes us acceptable in the sight of GOD but it is that which stamps the image of CHRIST upon us. GOD is pleased not only to make us acceptable in HIS sight through the righteousness of CHRIST laid to our account, but HE is also pleased to manifest HIS power in HIS elect by conforming them to HIS image. *“But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off (or have put off, see Col. 3:9, Rom.6:6) concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on (or have put on, see Col 3:10) the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph 4:20-24) “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Co 5:17)*