

## 485 “Holiness becometh thine house”

The theme of last week’s Reflection concerned our doubly-grounded faith in the Fact of Jesus’ resurrection: first is our faith on subjective, heart-based grounds, because the resurrection is so prominently set forth in God’s Word; and second is our faith on objective, head-based grounds, because dismissing Jesus’ resurrection with any naturalistic, non-miraculous explanation turns out to be impossible. This means that by God’s grace we are well-equipped to show Christ-deniers that faith in Jesus’ resurrection is wholly in line with the facts rather than in the face of the facts.

Establishing the truth of the resurrection is unlikely of itself to bring about a person being converted to Christ, (though it certainly persuaded Thomas! – John 20.26-29), but it does demonstrate that Christian faith is well-founded and prepares the way for the Holy Spirit to do His gracious work of new birth in the seeker’s life (John 3.3-8).

The Spirit’s work then continues after conversion, with the steady process of “sanctification”, that is, the “holy-fying” of the Christian believer’s life. This need for holiness, “purity” being a good single word to define holiness, occurs throughout God’s Word. Overarching all else, Almighty God Himself is utterly holy, as Isaiah was shown in his heavenly vision – “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up ... And one cried unto another, and said, “Holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory”; Isaiah’s reaction was that of holy fear (from Isaiah 6.1-5, KJV). We see also that the Son and the Holy Spirit of course share this divine holiness with God the Father (egs., Luke 1.35; 4.34 / John 14.26; 15.26).

This heavenly scene of awesome holiness is still the backdrop for all our dealings with Almighty God, for, despite His many blessings bestowed upon us in Christ, He remains our heavenly Father. As with any father, God’s fatherhood denotes seniority and authority on His side, and responsibility under Him and accountability to Him on ours. Some Christian fellowships these days seem to assume that, since His gift of Christ, God the Father is now “God Almatey”, as the saying goes: that is, easy-going and laid-back on His part as He tut-tuts with a friendly wink at our sins, and content for us to be equally laid-back in our dealings with Him. A good example of this casual approach involves our wandering into worship late, with a cup of coffee and some texting to get done during the sermon! No. God’s holiness should still evoke our reverent fear (egs., Acts 9.31 / Ephesians 5.21 / Hebrews 12.28-29).

Next - “holiness becometh thine house” (Psalm 93.5b). These days the Lord God has many such “houses” which need to remain holy. First are the physical buildings, of then and now, dedicated to our worship of Him. We see God’s meticulous instructions concerning the tabernacle, the priesthood, the Law and the temple. It is telling to look up in our Concordances the scores of entries for the word “holy” found especially in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, I and II Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Christian church buildings of today, being witnesses to Christ within their communities, are also to be “holy” – well-kept inside and out, and with an atmosphere of reverence within.

The same need for holiness applies to God’s other houses, namely the homes of all Christian people. May these private homes too be “holy” - their appearance, furnishings, atmosphere and occupants – serving as faithful Gospel witnesses for all who pass by or enter in.

Then we come on to a final form of “thine house”, consisting of God’s chosen people themselves, both corporately and individually, who comprise “the temple of God” (egs., I Corinthians 3.16-17; 6.19 / II Corinthians 6.16; 7.1 / Titus 2.12-14 / Hebrews 12.10,14 / I Peter 1.15-16 / II Peter 3.8-12). Here again, holiness - purity - of thought, word and deed is to be the norm for all who bear the name of Christ. We fail of course, but – “If we confess our sins, he (God the Father) is faithful and just, to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1.9).

We can all see that God’s world is in a sorry and perilous state these days, due to wanton UN-holiness at all levels of society over past times; truly, - “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3.23). As such, holiness within today’s various “houses” of the Lord God – churches, homes, gathered Christians and individual Christians – is as vital as it has ever been. Regarding any such “houses” that we are personally involved with, how are they doing?

“Be ye holy, for I am holy”, sums it up (from Leviticus 11.44, quoted in I Peter 1.16). In Christ holiness is still our calling, and still our Christian responsibility.

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