

~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:

"But like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living, because it is written ye shall be holy for I am holy" -- 1 Peter 1:15,16.

The word "like" suggests at once the divinely implanted principle of imitateness. There is not one gifted and noble mother in all the world who would not be pleased to have her best qualities repeated in the life of her daughter. There is not one great artist or genius in literature or statesmanship who would not be pleased at the thought that the great gift would reappear again in his son. It is a natural feeling of the parental heart.

Now the great moral attribute of God is His infinite, eternal, unchangeable holiness. Need we wonder that He is so anxious to have this characteristic reproduced in every child of His redeeming love? It would be the wonder of earth and heaven if God didn't feel that way toward us all.

There are many holiness people who are not holy people. They are in the ranks. They follow the crowd. They like the company; but they have not the inner experience. We should have a reality as well as a profession -- an experience as well as a name. They who have the real experience do exploits. They are glorious as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. I. -- God's Holiness is a Perfect Holiness.

It is unthinkable that God should have an imperfect holiness. It would then be all out of harmony with His other attributes. But our holiness is to be like God's. It is to be genuine from skin to core. There is no "suppression" in this kind of holiness, no concealed carnality within. There is no "inward sin and corruption to the last hour of life."

Some preach "cleansing and holiness;" but they say, "We shall never be sinless in this world." There are still "depths upon depths of mischief that lie hidden within us." Now we might ask what kind of holiness is it that is "not free from sin to the last day of our lives?" What kind of holiness is it which co-exists with "indwelling corruption," "which always will defile the very best deeds and holiest efforts of this life?" What kind of cleansing is it which leaves "depths upon depths of mischief in us" to defile our lives? Manifestly "corruption" holiness, "sinful" holiness, is not God's kind; and our holiness is to be like God's.

Some one says, "That is an overwhelming standard. Is it not too high?" We answer, "Jesus lifted up this standard: 'Be ye therefore perfect.'" John tells us, "Every one that hath this hope set on Him (Jesus), purifieth himself, even as He is pure." We should accept the standard and depend on God's almighty grace to keep it. II. -- It is eminently Practical Holiness.

"Holy in all manner of living." It is not merely talk and cheap profession, but godly deportment. It is not fad-riding, but everyday godliness -- that speaks the truth and pays the grocery bill, and the doctor, and the newspaper, and the preacher, and the milkman. Its solemn covenants are not a mere "scrap of paper." Practical holiness is not fanaticism, for it is guided by the Word of God and walks in "His steps Who did no sin." God practices holiness, and so must we if we are like Him.

It means holiness in our physical life. We are to "eat or drink, or whatever we do, for the glory of God." It means to clothe ourselves for health, rather than for display of our person: bathe, sleep, wake, work and play for God. If our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, treat it reverently and care for it for God. If your mouth belongs to God, do not put tobacco or whiskey into it; for that insults God, and shortens life and your power of service.

It means holiness in your intellectual life, your reading, study, opinions, doctrines; "bringing every thought and imagination into captivity to Christ." It means loving truth and seeking it with an honest heart to put it in practice. Otherwise one is not holy as God is holy.

It means to be holy in political life, hating and Opposing every kind of sin, prohibiting every public evil. It means to be holy in social life; no ungodly companionships; no unholy lodges; no forbidden marriages. It means a clean parlor, a clean library, clean pictures, a clean household where Jesus might feel at home. III. -- It is a Professed Holiness.

God professes His holiness; and He never wearies of telling us that He is holy. His command is: "Be ye yourselves holy, for I am holy." Now, plainly, we cannot have a holiness like God's unless we have a similar disposition to let it be known. A quotation was sent to me from a great evangelist. He said: "If you become holy

or sanctified you need not blow a horn about it; people will find it out without your telling them." That dear brother never said anything more unwise. He might as well have told his converts: "If you get converted keep still about it. You need not blow your horn; people will find it out." Such conduct as that would drive all the Christian religion from the earth. God said: "Ye are my witnesses." Possess and profess is the law and the life of genuine Christian experience.

The Israelites had to bring a basket of early fruit to the place of worship, and profess before the priest." . . . And thou shalt set it down before Jehovah thy God and worship. . . . And rejoice in all the good which Jehovah thy God hath given thee" (Deut. 26:1-11). Frances Willard tells us pathetically that She followed false advice, and kept still about her sanctification until she suddenly waked up to the awful fact that she "had nothing to keep still about."

God will have the glory, and we must profess the blessing or lose it. The disciples said: "We cannot but speak the things we saw and heard." We are witnesses of these things. The devil would like to have us keep still and grieve the Spirit and lose the blessing. IV. -- It is a Positive Holiness.

We are quite aware that the negative side of holiness comes first -- the cleansing from indwelling Sin. So the sin question is the basis of the whole subject of holiness. There can be no holiness at all without getting rid of the uncleanness of the heart. The very words for holiness and sanctification mean cleansing from sin.

Hagios means "pure, righteous, holy."

Hagiasmos means "moral purity, sanctification."

Hagiasunen means "sanctification, sanctity, holiness."

Hagiotēs means "holiness, sanctity."

Hagiazo means "to separate, consecrate, cleanse, purify, sanctify."

These Greek words do not mean "suppression," or "counteraction," or "filling," or "ecstasy," or "empowering," or "emotional experience." They mean getting rid of defilement. So the sin question is the center of the holiness movement. Sin is the deadly damnable thing that God hates. "It turned the angels out of heaven, and wrecked the earth, and murdered the Son of God, and fills hell with those for whom Christ died."

Holiness means getting rid of sin, actual and inbred, sin in every form and kind and degree. This is why the devil and wicked men and carnal preachers are so opposed to the genuine holiness movement.

But there is also a positive side to the blessing. It is more than a cleansed heart. The heart is first emptied of depravity and wickedness, and then filled with the Holy Spirit, and all the fruits of the Spirit, joy, peace, goodness, patience, power and love. V. -- It is a Personal Holiness.

There are those who profess to teach holiness, and who call themselves holy; only they say they are not holy in themselves, they are holy in Jesus. They imagine they have a legal, fictitious holiness in Him. He is a covering for their vileness; and God, when He looks at them, does not see them, but sees their covering -- Jesus. In other words, they try to make themselves believe that God works a deception on Himself, like a man looking through green-colored glasses, who looks at a dry tree and persuades himself that it is green.

This is bad theology; it is not Bible. What does our text say in the Greek and the Revised Version? "Be ye yourselves also holy," "Ye shall be holy for I am holy." A Calvinist preacher said to us: "I have holiness; that is, I am not holy in myself, but I am holy in Christ. God sees Him and not me." Even Charles Spurgeon preached in one of his sermons: "Arise, believer, and behold thyself perfect in Christ Jesus. Let not thy sins shake thy faith in the all-sufficiency of Jesus. Thou art with all thy depravity still in Him, and therefore complete. Thou hast need of nothing beyond what there is in Him. In Him thou art just and entirely clean, in Him an object of divine approval and eternal love. Now, as thou art, and where thou art, feeble, fickle, forgetful, frail in thyself, yet in Him thou art all that can be desired. Thine unrighteousness is covered, thy righteousness is accepted, thy strength perfected, thy safety secured, thy heaven certain." To tell people "full of sins and depravity" such a message was a horrible perversion of truth. And there is no Scripture for such rank antinomianism. VI. -- It is a Pure Holiness.

It is because the Holy Ghost fire has burned carnality out. As God said in Isaiah: "I will turn my hand upon thee,

and thoroughly purge away thy dross and will take away all thy tin". (1:25). So also in Malachi: "He is like a refiner's fire, and He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness" (3:3, 4). "Every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Scriptural holiness has the holy Christ for its model.

A man gets a degree of holiness -- holiness of outward conduct in regeneration. He henceforth does not lie, or swear, 'or Steal, or get drunk, or willfully sin in regeneration. But real holiness goes deeper than the outer conduct, and cleanses us from the indwelling sin. That inbred sin principle which fights against our piety and makes us jealous, and revengeful, and willful, and passionate, and hot-tempered, and selfish, and self-indulgent, must be and is consumed by the fire of the Holy Ghost before we have the holiness described in the text that makes us "holy like God," and "pure as He (Christ) is pure." VII. -- It is a Possible Holiness.

We know it is possible for many unanswerable reasons. (1) Jesus prayed for it (John XVII). (2) Jesus died for it. "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it" (Eph. v.25). (3) Jesus commanded it (Matt. v.48). (4) He calls us to it (1 Thess. iv. 7). (5) He promises it. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. v.24). (6) He baptizes us with the Holy Ghost and fire to produce it in our hearts. For these six best of all reasons we know we can have this blessing. VIII. -- It is a Present Holiness.

Jesus never sought holiness. He had it. God does not seek or try to grow into holiness; He has it now. And ours is to be like God's, a present holiness. God says under oath that we may have it now and all the days of our life (Luke 1:73-75). In our text we are commanded in the aorist tense (genesthete) "Be ye now at once holy like God." We cannot be absolute, self-contained, independent and self-sufficient in holiness like God. But ours, derived from Him and induced by His Holy Spirit baptism, can be in quality like God's holiness, as a thimbleful of ocean-water is like the ocean. Thus we can have a perfect practical, professed, positive, personal, pure, possible, present, holiness. All praise to the God of our salvation. Jesus Christ then becomes our wisdom from God, and justification, and Sanctification; and some sweet day He will bring us to glorification and an eternal heaven. Jesus shall not have prayed and died in vain. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."