

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HOLY?

What does it mean to be holy? We are considering this question, not from the standpoint of theology or religious philosophy, but as a practical everyday problem. We want to know what the world and the church have a right to look for in the lives of those who profess to be holy. What are the distinguishing characteristics of this experience? Are there any tests by which to judge it? We believe there are, and that the Scriptures give us such a distinguishing code of ethics.

The apostle Paul sums up the traits of the carnal mind in his epistle to the Ephesians under the following heads—first, deceitfulness; secondly, carnal anger; thirdly, unholy fear or cowardice; fourthly, corrupt conversation; and fifthly, violations of brotherly love such as bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice. To be sure the carnal mind can be known only by its manifestations, but these have already been put off, and now the apostle urges the newborn convert to take a step in advance and put off the carnal mind itself. Those inner stirrings which never come to expression in the life, are what the apostle is after here. Then in order to heighten the effect, he gives a series of admonitions and exhortations from the negative standpoint—indicating what the holy life is in contrast to the carnal mind; and concludes by a positive assertion of love as the essence of that life.

The first characteristics of a holy life, then, is the absence of deceit. The natural heart is deceitful—this is its most outstanding characteristic. Holiness on the other hand is based on truth—genuineness, integrity, frankness, transparency and honor. Those who are entirely sanctified do not seek to appear better than they are. There is a marked absence of pride, strut and self-sufficiency. They walk in faith and humble reliance upon the Spirit. They will not magnify either their gifts or their graces. They do not desire to appear good or great or wise in any but the Saviour's eyes. His smile of approval is always sought, and to Him their hearts ever turn in love and loyalty.

The second characteristic of a holy life is the absence of carnal anger. The newly converted sometimes feel the stirrings of anger, but as they walk in the Spirit they repress it so that it does not come to outward expression. But the sanctified do not struggle against this inward stirring, they never feel it. The carnal mind has been crucified and his lusts destroyed. There is a sense, however, in which anger is holy and our people need to keep this distinction clearly in mind. Failure to do so has often confused young people. Jesus looked in anger upon the desecration of the temple, and God attributes anger to Himself. But there is a wide difference between holy anger or righteous indignation as the holiness people are inclined to put it, and sinful anger. Carnal anger springs from sinful affections and carries with it a desire for revenge, or retaliation. Holy anger is the outburst of pure love against that which is unjust or unholy.

The third characteristic of a holy life is the absence of a man-fearing spirit which issues in cowardice. We are exhorted not to give place to the devil. He magnifies evil until it appears mountain high, and minifies the good until it is as a molehill. "We are like grasshoppers in their sight," said the ten spies;

but "They shall be bread for us," said faithful Caleb and Joshua. There is the absence of moral cowardice in the lives of the holy. They can die, but they will not compromise with sin, nor will they deny their faith, as long as the Spirit of holiness dwells in them. Here again, we should make a careful distinction. Holiness does not eliminate that fear which is a God given protective instinct. It will not make the timid bold, except in the way of duty and privilege. It does, however, deliver from that fear which has torment and is born of a lack of faith in God. He that feareth is not made perfect in love, for perfect love casteth out fear.

The fourth characteristic of a holy life is the absence of corrupt conversation. By this term the apostle has no reference to obscene language, only sinners of a low type indulge in filthy words and smutty stories. What he does mean, is the "filthiness of the spirit" which attaches to words good in themselves. He is striking at motives rather than forms of language. He means words barbed with anger or tinged with impatience. You will recall the simple lines:

For words but come from the lips,
And grow by study and art;
But the tones leap forth from the inner self,
And reveal the state of the heart.

What the apostle teaches here is that we cannot only utter true words, but we can utter them in a right spirit and with right motives. In the sanctified life, therefore, conversation—whether words or manner of living—will be both outwardly and inwardly free from wrong tempers. Insinuations, slurs, cutting remarks, or words that tend to corrupt and disintegrate the good, belong neither to the converted nor to the entirely sanctified life.

The fifth characteristic of a holy life is the absence of unbrotherliness. There is no bitterness of spirit among those who are wholly sanctified, no wrath, no anger, no clamor after position or place, no evil speaking and no malice. Here again the apostle John joins with Paul in declaring that the supreme evidence of love to God is love for the brethren.

We have given some of the things which must be absent from the life if it is to be holy. The apostle concludes with a positive statement concerning the life of holiness as one of divine love, and exhorts all who profess this blessing of holiness to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.—Herald of Holiness.

THE MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD AND UNAPPRECIATED GOSPEL.

We once had a presiding elder who thought we were fanatical to make a specialty of preaching holiness. He was on a committee to make the program for a preachers' meeting. He had me put down for the topic, "The Mission of Preaching." One of the committee told me afterwards that he said he wanted to get me to see that I was out of the gospel order. I never was more grateful for an assignment in my life. It gave me the great opportunity of showing that the great mission of preaching is to get the church to seek holiness of heart. He was a good man, but he had limited views on the object of the gospel. The great object of true gospel preaching is not to hold up salvation as an insurance from future hell, but to save men from

sin that makes hell a possibility. Those who suppose that the object and end of preaching is to get sinners saved from hell are as far from the real truth as those who would suppose that the great object of education is to teach the alphabet, or that the great object of architecture is just to show men how to lay the foundation of a building, or that the great end of mathematics is to teach the multiplication table.

The Scripture teaches that God gave the different gifts of the ministry "for the perfection of the Saints" (see Eph. 4:12). Paul said he preached Jesus, "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). An archangel from heaven told Zacharias that John the Baptist was raised up "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

If the Bible and common sense do not teach that the ministry is in the world to show men how to get to heaven, then we have failed to understand what the ministry is called to do. How men can be made ready for heaven without being told clearly that holiness is the preparation for heaven we fail to see.

What the object of preaching is: It is impossible to tell, except that the ministry are to make a specialty of the fitness for heaven. It seems to us that it would take all the time and effort of the ministry to tell men how to get it and how to keep it. How can we preach holiness without being definite in the matter? To us, one of the saddest things on earth is to hear ministers say they believe in holiness and then deride the idea of constantly telling people how to get it and how to keep it. Is it not degrading and insulting to the Author of our religion to hear men say with scorn, and even ridicule, that they do not believe in making the fitness for heaven a specialty? What else are men put into this world for, except to get ready for heaven? Even the much neglected doctrine of repentance is but the foundation or stepping stone to the fitness of heaven. Regeneration is only the beginning of "the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord." Man should hear of holiness as the fitness for heaven so much that they will believe it. And they should continue to hear it until they get it, and then should be told how to retain it. This would mean continuous preaching on holiness.

A brother said to me the other day: "I mean to preach holiness as long as I live." I replied, "That is the only time you have to preach it—while you live." Soon it will be shown at the Judgment Bar whether you tried to preach a gospel that keeps men ready for heaven all the time, for to this were you called to the ministry—no matter if men do call it with scorn a "one-idea ministry."—The Christian Witness.

God's path is on the sea just where we would not expect it to be; so when He leads us by unexpected ways, off the strong, solid land out upon the changing sea. Then we may expect to see His ways. We are with one who finds a path as He goes. That is better than having a path ready tracked out for it makes us perfectly independent of circumstances.

As on this road of life you walk, plant by the side a little cross of love, to light the way for other lonely souls.

Who would not be a road maker for a King, and spend his life making high-ways for God.

The highest altitudes of any man's life is to stand waiting for what God will choose to make him.—Brooks.