

HOLINESS—

Promotive of the Angels' Song

By Rev. J. L. Brasher

The mighty chorus sung by the angels over the Bethlehem hills was made up of two ideas, two attitudes, and two results. Glory to God, peace and good will to men. None of these can be fulfilled without some measure of holiness. It can only be fully realized so far as humanity is concerned by the perfection of holiness in the hearts of men. Men can not add to or enhance God's glory. They may reveal it. They can only do this when His will is wrought in them and they themselves become a revelation of God. God says, condemning the folly of idolatry, "I am God, and there is none beside Me, and My glory will I not give to another." Here God reveals His exclusiveness, because He will share with no other the glory of the spiritual perfection of men. He is exclusive in that He says, "Look unto Me all, ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved: for I am God, and there is no other." The song announces that now God's glory is revealed in the incarnation of His Son, "born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them who are under the law." "Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

A Saviour! What a word of hope is this to a world in the darkness of sin. A Saviour from what? "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save His people from their sins." Man's freedom and kingliness had been abused by a wrong choice upon his part, with the result that a race is wrecked and "far gone from original righteousness."

But God clothes Himself with humanity, and stoops under humanity's burdens and sorrows and identifies Himself with their recovery. There is no glory equal to that glory revealed in turning a sin-bent, hell-bound wretch into a saint filled with supreme love to God, and reflecting the image of God in a life of holiness in a world of sin.

In freedom from fleshly dominance and the evils of sinful tendencies to a life all God-centered, God-controlled, God-saturated. Glory to God in the highest can only be reached when glory to God alone is sought. No creature, however high or low, may divide with Him our supreme adoration. Such adoration can only be known and reached when men are sanctified wholly and their whole being is filled with pure love in which there is no admixture of self resulting in self-adoration or the adoration of any creature. But such love is holiness. It fulfills all the needs of the law with relation to God. He does not want punctilious obedience in the letter of the law, but the unmixed and constant love of our hearts doing all that we can do because we love Him. This is the first great commandment fulfilling all requirements of creaturehood toward God. God's glory is seen more in the beautiful love and devotion of the humblest of His saints than in all the wonders of earth and sky. Those who leave the sanctuary of God on the Sabbath day to revel in nature worship—to see Him in brooks and fields and streams and sky, forget that the greatest beauty God Himself has seen is found in the face of His saints who have "looked unto Him and been lightened," or been made radiant. And at last,

when His will is wrought and His saints in radiant glory stand around His throne, the chief attraction to God shall not be the bejeweled city whose proud stories He has builded, any more than a lover would stand and admire a building while his bride-to-be stood on its steps, awaiting him, all radiant in love. Our eyes are holden yet in a measure, so that we do not see the glory of His riches in His saints. But some day we shall behold the amazing beauty of His assembled multitudes, and He also beholding them "shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

"On earth peace, good will toward men." This is the second attitude or result announced by the angel chorus. There can come no universal good will to men until there shall be felt in our hearts the wonder of perfect love fulfilling all the ends of law toward all men.

EVEN SO, COME QUICKLY

The Prince of Peace came down to earth
With God's goodwill to men,
And all the hosts of heaven sang,
And loud their hallelujahs rang
O'er sleeping Bethlehem;
But men heard not the songs of love
For tumults of earth's strife;
High on a hill they hewed a tree,
Carried their King to Calvary,
And slew the Lord of Life.

The Prince of Peace looks down on earth
Sick with the strife of sin,
And watches men wage warfare blind,
The while He yearns to help them find
The Peace He died to win.
War rages on in savage hate
With spectred horrors grim;
Distracted earth is sore distressed
And prays for peace and cries for rest,
But will have none of Him.

The Prince of Peace shall come to earth
And earth shall own His sway;
Not thorns but glory on His brow
Earth's every knee to Him shall bow
In that triumphal day.
His righteous rule shall know no end,
Wars shall forever cease;
But not till comes her Saviour King
Love's banner o'er His world to fling,
Shall rebel earth have peace.
—E. Margaret Clarkson.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," settles forever the problem of ill will, of selfishness, of greed, of covetousness, of oppression, of injustice, of war. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor," is the negative side of this experience. But love is "kind," says Paul, and that reveals its positive side. The kind man never afflicts or hurts his neighbor, but on the contrary, does him all the good of which he is capable as need requires. How can any rational man dream of permanent peace until the day of universal holiness, until that day when there shall not be needed any man to say to his neighbor, "Know ye the Lord?" But all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest, and the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Then and then only shall "every man dwell under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall molest or make afraid."

Impossible?

Why should it be thought impossible for a soul to be made holy in this life? Is it because God is unable to make us holy? Surely not for that reason. Is it because He is unwilling? Who dares to say it? Has He told anyone that He is unwilling? Would not any candid man, in reading the Bible, be led to believe from what he finds there that God is both able and willing to make us holy?

Why then should it be considered fanaticism to teach that holiness is possible in this world? "The evil surroundings make such an experience impossible," someone says. What! Are surroundings and environment mightier than the power of Almighty God?

"But it is considered fanaticism by the great leaders of the church today," some say. Well, it was not considered fanaticism by great and good men of former generations—such men as George Fox, John Wesley, John Fletcher, Bishops Asbury and William Taylor, and multitudes of others. If present-day church leaders reject it, have they received new light? If so, when and where? And what are the fruits of this new revelation, for all new revelations of truth must be divinely accredited or we cannot accept them.

For ourselves we are determined to stick to the old truth preached by God's faithful servants all down the ages; truth which can never be called antiquated because in reality it is timeless, since it was formulated before time began, for "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."—Selected.

PROMPT RESISTANCE

I have found in all my experience that in every temptation the victory much depends on resisting the first attack. To stop and reason for a moment is dangerous. Is the object or gratification forbidden? That is enough if we truly love the Lord our God, but when we deliberate, we throw ourselves into the arms of Satan. Neither ought consequences to be considered; God will see to them; better suffer anything than His frown. Oh, may I ever walk by this rule, and live to please my God alone.
—William Carvosso.

What a glorious consummation that will be! Universal peace among men, universal adoration of our God and King. Sin cleansed from the hearts of men and banished from the walks of men. God dwelling among them, spreading His tabernacle over them. Eden became universal. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." "The lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them." Sin gone, Satan gone, death gone, tears gone, pain gone. Peace here, righteousness here, holiness here, love here, life here, the Trinity here! All God's universe—all the world—bathed in dazzling glory, eternal in the center of which man redeemed from all his ills occupies the front of the stage as the chief revelation of God's glory and the fulfillment of the angels' song.