

Witnesses to Holiness

by Charles William Butler

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of holiness and the believer's journey toward complete sanctification through faith in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 20:27, Acts 1:8, Romans 6:14, Ephesians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Christian Holiness", "Entire Sanctification"

Description

Charles William Butler preaches on the testimony of Brother John Garrick, emphasizing the importance of experiencing complete deliverance from sin through regeneration and entire sanctification. The sermon highlights the distinction between sin existing in our lives and sin reigning over us, pointing towards the work of God in removing sin from our innermost nature through sanctification. The experience of Christian Holiness leads to abiding victory, a deep love for the Bible, a sensitive conscience, spiritual empowerment, and a burning desire for revival. Various testimonies from historical figures like Lady Huntington, Jonathan Edwards, and John Wesley further affirm the transformative power of holiness in one's life.

Transcript

In a little journal which came to my attention sometime ago from London, England, I found the testimony of one, brother John Garrick, under the caption of "A Complete Deliverance." I greatly enjoyed this testimony and am passing it on to others. In connection with it I wish to call attention to one very important statement. Brother Garrick witnesses with reference to his experience in regeneration, "Sin did not reign in my life, but it existed." This statement of the truth is really classical.

The gracious grace of regeneration breaks the power of sin and conditions one to live in victory over it. However, as long as sin exists as an indwelling fact in our lives, the danger of failure is very greatly increased. This discrimination makes exceedingly clear the work of entire sanctification. In this grace sin, as such, is removed from our inmost nature; and in its place there exists a purity which not only frees from sin but which includes an inwrought righteousness which is ours by faith in Jesus Christ. The experience of Christian Holiness, in its very nature and content, provides the believer with the secret of abiding victory. In this grace there is an element of self-preservation as well as an element which gives the holy urge for its propagation.

Brother Garrick's testimony follows. The sainted Fletcher of Madeley says,

When you are solemnly called upon to bear testimony to the truth and to say what great things God has done for you, it would be cowardice or false prudence not to do it with humility. I was born again when eighteen years of age, and a great change was wrought in my life by the Spirit of God. Such a fountain of joy was opened in my heart that it utterly extinguished the desire for all I had formerly found pleasure in. I was a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things had passed away, all things had become new. I had passed from death unto life. My entry into the Christian experience was so satisfactory to me that I imagined the work of God in my soul was complete; that sin had not only been forgiven, but destroyed. However, I was soon to find my mistake. I was an out-and-out Christian and very earnest and sincere in my service. I wished to be a useful member in the church, but soon I became conscious of the presence of a "mixed multitude" in my inner being.

There were hankerings for the things of Egypt, murmurings against God because of a dissatisfied experience, and passionate longing for the promised land. Sin did not reign in my life, but it existed. It had been subdued but not removed. The old man had been bound but not cast out and spoiled of his goods. I continued like this for eighteen months, when Mr. T. Lamb Scott came to address some meetings in connection with the Pentecostal League of Prayer which were being held in the Mission I was attending. He preached complete deliverance from sin and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to meet the entire need of man. In response to his appeal I claimed the blessing and, to the glory of God, I humbly testify that God has sanctified me wholly. He has baptized me with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Hallelujah! To all the world I dare avow That Jesus sanctifies me now.

For me to describe what I then realized is utterly impossible. Jesus became a mighty reality. He became all-in-all, the altogether lovely One, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley. Hallelujah! Glory! I have cause to shout over the work of that eventful day. During the seventeen years that have since passed, God has stood by and helped me. I have had varying circumstances to test the genuineness of my submission and the saving power of God, and I can truthfully say I know "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin."

Some of the results of the baptism of the Holy Ghost in my life have been:

The Bible has become an inexpressible treasure. I love it above all other books.

A sensitive conscience.

A deep realizing sense of spiritual things.

An increase of spiritual power.

A burning desire to tell the blessed story of Christ and his "great salvation."

A passionate longing for revival.

Experiences of others fully corroborate this:

"My whole heart has not one single grain, this moment, of thirst after approbation. I feel alone with God; He fills the void; I have not one wish, one will, one desire, but in Him; He hath set my feet in a large room. I have wondered and stood amazed that God should make a conquest of all within me by love." -- Lady Huntington.

"Holiness -- as I then wrote down some contemplations on it -- appeared to me to be of a sweet, calm, pleasant, charming, serene nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, ravishment to the soul; in other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant fruits and flowers, all delightful and undisturbed, enjoying a sweet calm and the gentle vivifying beams of the sun." -- Jonathan Edwards.

"All at once I felt as though a hand -- not feeble, but omnipotent; not of wrath, but of love -was laid on my brow. I felt it not outwardly but inwardly. It seemed to press upon my whole being, and to diffuse all through me a holy, sin-consuming energy. As it passed downward, my heart as well as my head was conscious of the presence of this soul-cleansing energy, under the influence of which I fell to the floor, and in the joyful surprise of the moment, cried out in a loud voice. Still the hand of power wrought without and within; and wherever it moved, it seemed to leave the glorious influence of the Saviour's image. For a few minutes the deep ocean of God's love swallowed me up; all its waves and billows rolled over me." -- Bishop Hamline.

"Many years since I saw that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." I began by following after it and inciting all with whom I had intercourse to do the same. Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view to obtain it; namely, by faith in the Son of God. And immediately I declared to all, "We are saved from sin, we are made holy by faith." This I testified in private, in public, and in print, and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses. I have continued to declare this for above thirty years, and God has continued to confirm the work." -- John Wesley in 1771.

"I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul; but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and, when I gave Him my will, He cam' to my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door." -- George Fox.

MY FIRST DAY IN CANAAN

In September of the year 1900 I was appointed pastor of the Methodist Church at Perry, Michigan. It was then a three point circuit. A few years before this, under the ministry of Reverend

J. F. Emerick, a mighty revival swept over this charge. Bro. Emerick was a definite holiness preacher. As a part of the results of that revival, there were definite living witnesses to the experience of second blessing holiness in each of the three churches. They were truly consistent, holy people. It was through the influence and invitation of some of these people that I attended the old State Holiness Camp Meeting at Eaton Rapids for three days. During that period of time I purchased a book entitled "The Sanctified Life" by Dr. Beverly Carradine. Through the ministry of the camp and of this book, I was led out of my wilderness journey into my spiritual Canaan. The old Jordan did truly divide, and I went over on dry ground. I had been dealing with the Lord in the realm of a perfect consecration and had acknowledged both my need and my pursuit of the blessing to a brother preacher on the train en route from Eaton Rapids to Lansing, Michigan. I had been getting ready for this change for some time. I boarded the train in Lansing for my home in Perry; and somewhere on that old Grand Trunk train, between Lansing and Perry, I truly passed over

Jordan and came into my spiritual inheritance in Canaan. I walked from the station to the Methodist parsonage singing,

I'm living in Canaan now,
I'm living in Canaan now,
I'm doing well, I'm glad to tell,
I'm living in Canaan now.

The atmosphere was so precious and the experience so delightful that I felt as though I had been living in that clime forever. It seemed literally to fit my soul. It was indeed the native clime for my new life in Christ. There was an immediate change of diet in my spiritual life. Such illumination was on the Sacred Page. It gave me a whole new Bible. I had been questioning with regard to the method of receiving this grace. How quickly I was enabled to see the two works of grace in the Word! I remember previous to this I had questioned a man who professed this grace, asking him to give me Scripture for the second work of grace. The dear man seemed a bit lost regarding the matter and was unable to give me much light. But, having received the grace, I immediately began to see the whole truth standing out prominently in Scripture. This happened on Saturday evening.

The very next morning I preached from the text, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 2:11). I was quick to see the double cure. Here is the record of two baptisms, involving two elements and two administrators; also involving two spiritual results, one symbolized by water, and the other symbolized by fire. I have done very little, if any, serving of manna from that time until now. The riches of grace opened to my soul as never before.

During the years which followed, there were occasions of loss for a time; but from these God graciously recovered me and taught me how to abide. The illumination of the Sacred Page has been one of the marked realities which has now been unbroken in my soul for a great many years. The ability to trust and hold steady in the absence of feeling and in the presence of very deep tests is one of the abiding results.

Entering Canaan involved to me a fixed attitude of loyalty to the Word of God and to the will of God. The result of a daybreak in my soul upon which there has been no nightfall to date has been an abiding evidence of this gracious grace. The consecration then made closed the door of my mind against all doubt of God's Word so that, instead of bowing the knee to what has been called a scientific age, I have continued to bow the knee to a holy God; and by his grace, like Paul of old, "I have kept the faith."

I have served an age of question and of doubt. It has been popular to speak of keeping "an open mind." In my own experience the open mind has been to increase light and knowledge of God and his Word and of the deep riches of his grace; but it has meant a closed mind to every approach to the reality of Christian faith which has raised questions of doubt through the mere speculations of human reason.

I want to bear testimony to the practical and working value of the grace of Christian holiness. I can witness after these many years that not one good word of the Lord has failed. Glory to his name! My faith is more certain, God is more real, and the grace of Christian holiness proves continually to be a working reality in performing service for God, and in meeting the tests of life.

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