

Our Position

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness and provides practical steps to achieve it, highlighting the difference between an emotional experience and true holiness.

Scripture: Matthew 5:8, Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 3:3

Topics: "Christian Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin delves into the topic of holiness, acknowledging the extensive literature and debates surrounding the subject. He emphasizes the importance of seeking true holiness as a deliverance from sin, not just an emotional experience, and criticizes the superficiality of some seekers who mistake fleeting emotions for true holiness. Baldwin highlights the teachings of John Wesley and John Fletcher on holiness, pointing out the necessity of understanding the steps required to attain this experience. He aims to provide practical guidance for those earnestly seeking the fullness of God, encouraging them to pursue true holiness diligently and not settle for anything less.

Transcript

Volume after volume has been written on the subject of holiness, until the ground has been pretty thoroughly canvassed. There is scarcely a phase of the subject that has not been criticized by its enemies and defended by its friends. It has been set before us as a desirable experience, until our eyes could almost see the luscious fruits of the Canaan of Perfect love; it has been defended as a biblical experience, until the Sacred Volume fairly sparkles with the gems of promise; it has been taught as a possible experience, until a man must be spiritually blind that cannot see his high privilege; it has been taught as a present experience, until persons whose hearts are still unclean can almost feel their feet pressing the vine-clad hills of Canaan; Heaven and earth, the Bible, human nature, and even hell, have been ransacked for incentives to draw or drive men's sluggish souls to action. Some of the mightiest intellects of earth have exhausted their resources in depicting the beauties, deliverances and possibilities of holiness. All this is good and necessary, but we take it for granted that the reader already accepts the doctrine, and so take up our task along another line. As some one has said, "Much has been written defining holiness, proving it to be scriptural and showing that it is desirable, but how to obtain the experience mortals desire to know."

The writer firmly believes in the Wesleyan view of holiness as the most scriptural and the most reasonable. A great many of the modern theories are a compromise with worldliness. This is an age when mist and darkness are settling over the hearts and consciences of men, and "they will not endure sound doctrine." As a consequence we see them professing holiness when they have not, as Fletcher says, "attained the candor of a conscientious heathen;" while manifesting unholy dispositions and tempers, and bringing into reproach the doctrine they so clamorously uphold. It makes no difference how loudly one may profess, if his life does not correspond with his profession, the world will call him a hypocrite.

The chief occasion for this deficiency in grace is a lack of depth in seeking. Seekers skim over the surface, and call the first stirring of their emotions the experience; and when the emotion subsides they find the same old trouble inside and are forced to one of two conclusions; either they must call these feelings temptation, and ignore them, or else give up their profession. They are not made to thoroughly understand that holiness is not merely an emotion, but a deliverance from sin, not a feeling, but a state.

Here is where Wesley is peculiarly clear in his teachings. He seldom, if ever, magnified the emotional, but held before the minds of his readers their deliverance from sin as that which they must obtain in order to be perfected in love. He held steadily to the necessary characteristics of the experience, and discouraged the use of expressions that would lead away from this central idea; while, on the contrary, a great many persons teach their own convictions, leadings, blessings and even notions, as a necessity for all.

John Wesley and his great defender, the saintly John Fletcher, have taught us much about how to obtain the experience of holiness, but neither of them has taken it in hand to lay before us consecutively the steps necessary to be taken. Although these things are scattered through their works, yet they are not, for the most part, in order, and are mixed in with page after page of the most wholesome of teaching on the nature and possibility of holiness. We have thought that if these gems could be brought together in such a way as to fit them to the peculiar requirements of today they would be of use to not a few struggling, panting seekers after the fullness of God.

This then is our reason for writing these pages -- to be of help to souls who have heretofore been tossed by many conflicting winds of doctrine, desiring to anchor in the haven of rest, but who are as yet unable to do so on account of their vague ideas of their own needs and privileges.

When God came to our own soul after years of struggling and fears and settled our heart in the bosom of his infinite grace, we cried, "O God, teach us the way to help others who are in the same condition." On our face before God, with our heart burning with the desire to be of some uses to these hungry ones, the conception of producing these pages was born

We have not attempted excellency of speech, since that would spoil the whole end we have in view; we have not feigned learning or superior spiritual attainments; but as a plain Christian we believed God had given us a message, and in the simplest manner possible we have delivered it. And throughout we have aimed to be practical. If you think our words at times are too plain, remember we had a message, and were so thoroughly taken with this thought that we could not well speak otherwise.

We have studiously omitted the marvelous and visionary and held to the unpolished truth. We have eliminated the peculiarities of our own experience, for no two are exactly alike in every particular, and held closely to those truths that are as nearly universal as possible. Where for thoroughness we have been forced to speak of individual manifestations the fact has been mentioned.

Reader, if you are praying for that purity which will fit you for the society and employments of heaven we trust our words will be of some use to you in gaining the goal of your endeavors, but put away the thought that it is too hard, and that you can never be made clean. Who can tell the value of a necessary article? much less can you tell the value of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." It is of such infinite worth that any price you can pay will be but a drop compared to a mighty sea. Do not seek an easy way or a "shorter route," but take the way that will lead you to the blood that washes thoroughly from every stain.

If you have already attained the fullness of love, we hope you will here find encouragements for your faith, and some humble lessons that will help you to be more effective in pointing others to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

With fervent prayer that God will bless our humble words to your good, and with an earnest desire that in the day of final reckoning we will find some one person that our tears and labors have furthered toward God, we commend these pages to your perusal, and may the blessings of the Triune God be with your spirits evermore.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/harmon-a-baldwin/our-position/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net