

# Holiness to the Lord.

by Edward Payson

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*The sermon describes a future state of the world where every place and employment is holy, every day is like a Sabbath, and every common meal is like the Lord's supper.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52:1, Zechariah 14:20, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 5:27, Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 1:15, Revelation 21:27

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Christian Sanctification"

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## Description

Edward Payson preaches about the glorious day predicted by the prophets and apostles, where true religion will universally prevail and Christians will attain greater sanctification, with every aspect of life dedicated to God. The sermon delves into a vision of a future where every daily task and interaction is infused with holiness and devotion to God, resembling the sacredness of the high priest's duties. It envisions a world where every place, every day, and every meal become sanctified, resembling a perpetual Sabbath and a continuous act of worship. The ultimate goal is to eliminate insincere worship and hypocrisy, creating a community where all are genuine disciples of Christ.

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## Transcript

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the howls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts."

Zechariah 14:20, 21.

need not be told, my friends, that the prophets and apostles often speak of a glorious day, which is to dawn upon the church in the latter ages of the world. Respecting this glorious day two things are predicted in the chapter before us. In the first place, we are told that the true religion shall then universally prevail. In that day the Lord shall be king over all the earth; and there shall be one Lord and his name one. In the second place, it is predicted that Christians shall make much greater attainments in religion, and that its sanctifying influence shall pervade all the common concerns and employments of life: In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every vessel in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein.

To show more particularly what these prophetic expressions imply, and what will be the state of the world when they are fulfilled, is my present design. 1. These expressions imply that, when the day here predicted arrives, all the common business, employments and actions of men shall be performed with as much seriousness and devotion to God, as the most pious Christians now feel when engaged in the most solemn duties of religion. Upon the very bells, or as the word sometimes signifies, upon the harness of the horses, and upon all the vessels which are employed for domestic purposes, shall be inscribed holiness to the Lord.

In this passage a part is by a common figure of speech put for the whole. A great part of the common business of life is carried on by the help of those domesticated animals which God has appointed to be the servants of man. They are our companions and assistants in almost all our labors. We employ them in cultivating the ground, in carrying home its produce, in the removal of all heavy bodies, in the erection of our habitations, in conveying us from place to place, and for various other purposes which it is needless to particularize; nor do we infrequently make use of them for purposes of relaxation and amusement.

And while the labors of men abroad are principally carried on by the assistance of these animals, the female sex at home are no less occupied with the various utensils which the ingenuity of man has contrived for the convenience of civilized domestic life. By the bells of the horses, therefore, is here meant, all the business of life in which men are engaged abroad; and by the cups or vessels, all the employments which occupy the female sex at home. Upon all these, upon all the daily employments of both sexes shall be inscribed holiness to the Lord.

That we may understand the import of this expression, it is necessary to recollect that, when the Jewish high priest was engaged in the duties of his sacred office, and especially when he went into the Holy of holies to burn incense, he was commanded to wear upon his forehead a mitre with the words, Holiness to the Lord, engraven upon it in letters of gold. By this inscription both the high priest himself, and all who read it, were forcibly reminded, that the God whom he served was a holy God, and that holiness becomes his house, his service, and his worshippers forever.

If he ever felt serious and devout, it would be when he wore this inscription upon his forehead. But in the day of which we are speaking, this inscription shall be upon the harness of the horses, and upon the utensils employed in domestic life; that is, as we have already observed, upon all the daily business, and employments of both sexes. We are not, however, to suppose that the letters which compose these words are actually to be written there. The meaning of this prediction evidently is, that, while persons are engaged in all the common business and concerns of life, whether at home or abroad, whether in the house or by the way, they shall feel as serious, as devout, as much engaged in the service of God, as did the Jewish high priest, when he wore that sacred inscription upon his forehead.

The merchant at his desk, the mechanic in his shop, the mariner in his vessel, the husbandman in his field, the traveler on his journey, and the female at home, shall have such a constant realizing sense of the presence and perfections of God, and such love, confidence, and reverence in exercise towards him, as will lead them to do everything in a holy manner and with a view to his glory. Everything will then be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Religion will then not be confined, as it too often is now, to the closet and the house of God; but she will walk abroad, pervading every place with her blessed influence, and cheering happy man in all his employments with her heavenly smiles and heart enlivening consolations.

Men will then labor as Adam did in paradise, where labor was rest, and employment, and pleasure. Friends and acquaintances will then meet, as Christians now meet, to serve and praise God; every meeting will be a religious meeting; men will then speak of the things of God, as the Jews were commanded to do, in the house and by the way, when they sit down and when they rise up, and conversation on earth will be like the converse of saints and angels in heaven. Then there will be no idle or profane language, no evil speaking or slander heard; for the law of love will be in the heart, and, of course, the law of kindness will dwell on the lips.

Then too, the press, as well as the tongue, will be sanctified. As men will learn war, so the press will tell of war, no more; but periodical publications will then spread abroad the politics, the laws, and the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom. Books will no longer contain poison for the soul, or fuel for hateful passions; but be streams flowing from the fountains of life and truth. Then too, all the domestic relations will be sanctified. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, will then love one another out of a pure heart fervently, as members of the same body, and fellow heirs of the same heaven.

The heart which says to God, our Father in heaven, will of course consider men as brethren upon earth. Man will then never meet an enemy in man, but a friend, and, what is more, a Christian friend. But time forbids us to enlarge. Suffice it to say, that all the common affairs of life will then be performed better than the most sacred religious duties now are. Thus everything will be turned to gold. Some faint traces of such a state of things, faint however indeed, we find in the better ages of the Jewish commonwealth.

For instance, when Boaz visited his reapers in the field, we find him saying to them, The Lord be with you; while they replied to him, The Lord bless thee. Such will be the language universally heard in the day of which we are speaking; and however nauseous and disgusting such expressions may seem, when considered as the cant of formality and hypocrisy, which speaks without feeling, they appear very different, viewed as the real language of the heart. Some such expressions are in common use among ourselves, though the real meaning is unknown, or forgotten, by thousands who adopt them.

The term Adieu, for instance, signifies, I commend you to God; and even the common expression, Good bye, is an abbreviation or corruption of the pious wish, God be with you. We mention these instances merely to show how the influence of religion will pervade even the common forms and ceremonies of society, in the day of which we are speaking. 2. In that day, every house, every shop, and the whole world itself, will be a house of God, a temple consecrated to his praise. A temple is a place consecrated and devoted to God for religious purposes.

But in that day every house will be such a place; every man will be a priest in his house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and to teach his children and domestics the right knowledge of God; and every domestic employment will be attended to, with such devotional feelings and exercises as are now felt by pious Christians in the house of God. Wherever smoke ascends to heaven from the habitations of men, there the incense of prayer and praise will ascend with it, as the prayers of the Jews ascended with the smoke of their burnt offerings.

In that day, every building erected for the purpose of labor or merchandise will be such a place; for every man will consecrate his labors and his gains to God, and present himself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, to be employed in his work. Then every vessel will be such a place, in which those that see God's works in the deep shall praise him for the greatness of his power; in which prayers and

thanksgivings will take the place of those oaths and curses by which they are now but too often profaned.

Then the whole earth shall be such a place; for it shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the seas; and neither the sun by day, nor the moon and stars by night, when they look down upon the earth, shall behold any thing transacted on its surface which is not done to God's glory, which is not a duty of religion. Then all the race of men will unite with the inanimate creation, in celebrating, the high praises of God, making sweet melody in their hearts unto the Lord. 3.

Every day will then be like a Sabbath. This day is now separated from the days of labor, for devotional purposes, and the more solemn performance of religious duties. But when every house shall become a temple, when everything shall be done in a devotional manner, when all our daily actions shall be performed with more love and zeal than our religious duties are now; then, it is evident, every day will be like a Sabbath and much more holy, than our best Sabbaths are now. All our time will then be given to God, and a continual Sabbath on earth will be at once an earnest, and a preparation for an eternal Sabbath in heaven. 4.

In that day, every common meal will be what the Lord's supper is now. This is evidently implied in an expression of the prophet in our text. After informing us, that every vessel in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to the Lord, he adds, and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein. You need not to be told that, under the Jewish dispensation, all the vessels and utensils employed in sacrificing to God, were solemnly consecrated to this service, and considered as holy; and if any man presumed to use either common fire, or any other vessels, in offering sacrifice to God, he was instantly struck dead for his presumption.

But it is foretold that, in the day of which we are speaking, men shall take the common vessels which are employed for domestic purposes, and use them for sacrifice; and this intimates, that all these vessels shall then be as holy as the vessels of the sanctuary which had been solemnly consecrated to the service of God; or, to use language more suited to the dispensation under which we live, every vessel shall be like the sacramental vessels, and every table like the Lord's table.

Now when this shall be the case, when every day shall be like a Sabbath, when every house shall be like a temple, when every man shall be like a minister in his own house, and all the domestic utensils holy, then, of course, every common meal will be like the Lord's supper. Persons will then partake of every refreshment with as much gratitude and love to Christ, and with as feeling a remembrance of his dying love, as the most pious Christians now feel at his table; and when persons invite each other to a feast, it will be like the solemn meeting of a church to commemorate their Saviour's death.

In a word, whether men eat, or drink, or whatever they do, they will then do all to the glory of God, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. 5. Though every place and every employment will then be holy, and every day like a Sabbath, yet the distinction which now prevails between the house of God and other places, and between the Sabbath and other days, will still be kept up. This is plainly intimated in another part of our text, where we are told, that the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Though all the vessels of the sanctuary were holy, yet some of them were considered as much more so than others. The bowls before the altar, for instance, which were employed to contain the holy incense, or to receive the blood of sacrifices, were considered as more holy than the pots or jars which received the ashes and other substances which were to be carried away, because they were put to a more sacred use. The meaning of this expression, then, evidently is, that those things which are now considered as holy

shall, in the day of which we are speaking, be much more so.

The Sabbath shall be far more strictly observed; the worship of God performed in a much more solemn manner; the temple of God frequented with far greater seriousness and devotion, than is at present the case; and this the difference between the house of God and other places, between the Sabbath and other days, and between the worship of God, and other employments, will still be as great, as it is now. The influence of religion will be felt in every place, and in every employment; but it will still be felt most powerfully, as it is now, at those times and in those places, which are especially set apart for devotional purposes.

Lastly; when this day arrives, there will be no insincere worshippers found in God's house, no hypocritical professors in his church; for our text assures us, that there shall no more be the Canaanite in the house of the Lord. The hypocritical Jews were called Canaanites, because, like those idolaters, they worshipped false gods, though they professed to worship none but the true. When therefore it is said, There shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord, the meaning is, that there shall be no formal, insincere worshippers in the house or church of God.

Then the whole congregation shall compose the church, and the church shall include none but the real disciples of Christ. Agreeably, we find the prophet Isaiah thus addressing the church by the name of Jerusalem, Rejoice, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for from henceforth there shall no more come into thee, the uncircumcised and the unclean. Thus, my friends, have I considered the expressions which compose our text, and endeavored to show what they imply. I am aware, that the picture which has been drawn will appear to many of you visionary and exaggerated, and you will say, at once, that it can never be realized.

And yet my friends, we have said nothing more than the word of God commands, nothing more than every professor of Christianity is commanded to seek, nothing more than he promises to aim at. We are commanded, and Christians promise, to strive to be holy, as God is holy, to do everything in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus, and whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God. They are commanded to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long; to pray without ceasing; to set the Lord ever before them; and even servants are expressly required to do whatever they do heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto men, knowing that they serve the Lord Christ.

And, my friends, the influence of religion naturally leads to all this, and nothing more is necessary to produce just such a state of things as we have described, than a proper degree of faith in the word of God. If all men had that faith, God and Christ and heaven and hell would, at all times, be realities to their minds; and, of course, affect them as such realities ought to do. Men would then see God everywhere, in all his works; they would see from what Christ has redeemed them; and of course, their reverence, and gratitude, and love would be always in fervent and living exercise.

I believe no person will doubt that, if all men were such Christians as St. Paul was, a great part, if not all that has now been said, would be witnessed among us. And it becomes us to remember that God can give all men as much grace as he gave Paul; and he has said that he will bring all this to pass; and therefore he will. Is any thing too hard for God? Hath he said, and shall he not do it? APPLICATION. 1. From this subject, my Christian friends, we may learn our great and innumerable deficiencies, and how wretchedly we live, in comparison with the manner in which we ought to live.

If it is the natural tendency of religion to produce such a state of things as has now been described, then it is evident that the best of us scarcely yet know what religion is. And who of you will say, that this is not the natural tendency of religion? Did not Christ give himself for us, that he might redeem us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works? Does not the Bible tell us that Christians are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, to show forth his praise?

And will you pretend that the motives set before us in the Bible ought not to produce such effects as have now been described? The dying love of Christ, the deliverance from eternal misery, everlasting happiness, not to mention the great increase of happiness such a life would produce in the present world. Surely these motives are sufficient, if we did but feel their force, to lead us to live as has now been described. And will any of you then complain, because we think the church are but little engaged?

Will you wonder at us and blame us, because we think it necessary to urge you to be more zealously affected in the pursuit of religion? You may indeed justly blame us for not living more in this manner ourselves, and say, Physician, heal thyself. My friends, permit us, while we confess our innumerable deficiencies publicly to declare unto you, that we intend, by the grace of God, to make at least an effort to come nearer the standard which we have now described. You may do what you please, but, as for me and for my house, we will endeavor thus to serve the Lord.

And who is willing to unite with us in making a similar attempt? Who of you will endeavor to spend every day, as a Sabbath, and perform every act to the glory of God? Remember that we have now great encouragement to do this. A good work, a blessed change has evidently begun. Time was when magazines, newspapers, and works of fiction were, to say the least, far from being religious. in their tendency. But now upon many of them Holiness to the Lord is inscribed. But perhaps some who would willingly engage in this attempt, have been so much discouraged, and led to entertain so many doubts of their state, by what has been said, that they have no courage to attempt anything. 2.

We may learn from this subject whether we have any religion or not. Should we rejoice in such a state of things as has now been described? If we should, we are Christians, for no unholy heart could be happy in such a world as this would be, did religion thus universally prevail. I doubt not that many in this assembly have felt, while listening to this discourse, that such a state of things, as we have described, would be a most melancholy state to them; they have felt something like gloom overspread their minds at the very thought of it; and not for the world would they see it realized, unless their own feelings should be altered in a corresponding manner.

All, therefore, who would heartily rejoice to see religion thus generally prevail; all who feel that such a state of society is just what they would desire to render them happy; all who are wishing and praying for its arrival, are certainly Christians, and have every encouragement to press forward to perfection. Lastly; from this subject we may learn what pleasures, pursuits, and employments are really lawful and pleasing to God. Every kind of amusement which would prevail, every object of pursuit that would be followed, every kind of employment which would afford a man subsistence in such a state of society as we have described, is lawful and consistent with religion.

But if there be any pleasures, pursuits, or employments, which such a universal prevalence of religion would banish from society, it is certain that they are inconsistent with religion, and therefore that they cannot be pleasing in the sight of God. It is also morally certain that, everything, which religion would banish, directly tends, by its prevalence, to banish, or at least to oppose religion. Let us then be careful to

pursue and indulge in nothing, which is inconsistent with the universal spread of Christianity; and while we do this we shall certainly be in the way to heaven, and shall bring down heaven to dwell with us on earth.

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