

Articles and Sermons :: The Unpopularity of Holiness -brenle**The Unpopularity of Holiness -brenle - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/20 15:38****The Unpopularity of Holiness***by Samuel Brenle*

“Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Dear brother, do not think you can make holiness popular. It cannot be done. There is no such thing as holiness separate from “Christ in you,” and it is an impossibility to make Christ Jesus popular in this world. To sinners and carnal professors, the real Christ Jesus has always been and always will be “as a root out of a dry ground... despised and rejected of men” (Isa. 53:2). “Christ in you” is “the same yesterday, today, and for ever”—hated, reviled, persecuted, crucified.

“Christ in you” came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; came “to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt. 10:35,36).

“Christ in you” will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed of penitence and humility; but He will pronounce the most terrible, yet tearful, maledictions against the hypocritical formalist and the lukewarm professor who are the friends of the world and, consequently, the enemies of God. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4). “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

In the homes of the poor and the haunts of the outcasts, “Christ in you” will seek and save the lost, and will sweetly, tenderly whisper, “Come unto Me, I will give you rest.” But in stately church and cathedral, where pomp and pride and conformity to the world mock God, He will cry out with weeping and holy indignation, “The publicans and harlots shall go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.”

“Christ in you” is not a gorgeously robed aristocrat, arrayed in purple and fine linen and gold and pearls, but is a lowly, peasant Carpenter, horny-handed, truth-telling, a Servant of servants, seeking always the lowest seats in the synagogues and feasts, condescending to wash the disciples’ feet. He “respecteth not the proud” (Ps. 40:4), nor is He of those who “flatter with their tongue” (Ps. 5:9); but His “words are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6); words “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Seek to know and follow in the footsteps of the true, real Jesus, the humble, holy Peasant of Galilee, for, truly, many “false Christs” as well as “false prophets” have gone out into the world.

There are dreamy, poetical Christs, the words of whose mouths are “smoother than butter, but in whose hearts is war; whose words are softer than oil, yet are they drawn swords” (Ps. 54:21). There are gay, fashionable Christs, “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having forms of godliness, but denying the power (holiness of heart) thereof... which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:4-7).

There are mercantile Christs, who make God’s house a den of thieves (Matt. 21:13).

There are feeding Christians, who would catch men by feeding the stomach rather than the heart and head (Rom. 16:18).

There are learned, philosophical Christs, who “spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world” (Col. 2:8).

There are political-reform Christs, who forget their Father's business in an all-absorbing effort to be elected, or elect, a ruler over this world, who travel halfway across the continent to deliver a speech on prohibition or women's rights, while a hundred thousand sinners are going to Hell at home, who vainly endeavour to club the fruit off the branches rather than to lay the axe at the root of the tree, that the tree may be good (Matt. 3:10).

They wanted to make the "Christ in you" a king one day, but He wouldn't be a king, save of men's hearts. They wanted to make Him a judge one day for about five minutes, but He wouldn't be a judge. He made Himself of no reputation (Phil. 2:7). He might have stopped on the throne of imperial Rome, or among the upper classes of society, or the middle classes, but He went from His Father's bosom, down past the thrones and the upper, middle and lower classes of society to the lowest place on earth, and became a Servant of all, that He might lift us to the bosom of the Father, and make us partakers of the Divine nature and of His holiness (2 Pet. 1:4, Heb. 12:10).

"Christ in you" gets under men and lifts them from the bottom up. If He had stopped on the throne He never would have reached the poor fishermen of Galilee, but, going down among the fishermen, He soon shook the throne.

It will not be popular, but "Christ in you" will go down. He will not seek the honor that cometh from men, but the honor that cometh from God only (John 5:44; 12:41-43).

One day a rich young man—a ruler—came to Jesus and said, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17). No doubt, this young man reasoned somewhat thus with himself: "The Master is poor, I am rich. He will welcome me, for I can give Him financial prestige. The Master is without influence in the state—I am a ruler; I can give Him political power. The Master is under a social ban, associating with those poor, ignorant fishermen. I, a wealthy young ruler, can give Him social influence."

But the Master struck at the heart of his worldly wisdom and self-conceit, by saying unto him, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; and come, follow Me." Come, you can serve Me only in poverty, in reproach, in humility, in social obscurity; for My kingdom is not of this world, and the weapons of this warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. You must deny yourself, for if you have not My spirit you are none of Mine (Rom. 8:9), and My spirit is one of self-sacrifice.

You must give up your elegant Jerusalem home, and come with Me, but, remember, the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. You will be considered little better than a common tramp. You must sacrifice your ease. You must give up your riches, for "hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" (Jas. 2:5). And it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter that kingdom. Remember, when you do this, you will lose your reputation. The bankers and belles of Jerusalem will say you are beside yourself, and your old friends will not acknowledge you when they meet you on the street. My heart is drawn to you; yea, I love you (Mark 10:21), but I tell you plainly that if you will not take up the cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple; yea, "if any man come to Me, and hate not (that is, love in a lesser degree father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). If you will do this, you shall have treasure in Heaven (Matt. 19:21).

Do you not see the impossibility of making such a radical Gospel as this popular? This spirit and the spirit of the world are as fully opposed to each other as two locomotives on the same track running toward each other at the rate of sixty miles an hour. Fire and water will consort together as quickly as the "Christ in you" and the spirit of the world.

Do not waste your time trying to fix up a popular holiness. Just be holy because the Lord God is holy. Seek to please Him without regard to the likes or dislikes of men, and those who are disposed to be saved will soon see "Christ in you," and will cry out with Isaiah: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts"; and, falling at His feet, they will say with the leper, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." And Jesus, having compassion on them, will say, "I will, be thou clean."