

Holiness unto the Lord

By

John Johnson

{Son of God on the Throne of Judgment, 1776}

In that great Day of Judgment, the holiness of the Lord God shall be manifest in truth; and magnified in its utmost perfection; for then it shall shine in its full glory, in Him who is the image of the invisible God; and the brightness of his glory. The Most High God takes this name and character, HOLY; as that by which he will be known to his people; it being the highest epitaph that can be given unto him. Of which name he appears the most jealous, and in the strictest manner, commands all that come near unto Him, to reverence. Therefore, in that great and glorious day, he will assuredly magnify the Glory of his Holiness above all things. Holiness appears to contain all the excellency, greatness, fullness, riches, glory, blessedness, and every perfection of all the attributes of the eternal God. Or in other words, it contains all that is great and good; or it is expressive of all that the infinite Jehovah IS. I cannot express; I call it, the excellency of his Majesty, the glory of the Divine Essence, the dignity of his Nature, the richness of the uncreated Mind, the fullness of the blessedness of the Fountain of all beings; but both my expressions and thoughts fail. But would we know what the holiness of God is; it may be best conceived in the contemplations of an humble mind, by observing, with sacred reverence, and tremendous awe, how it is set forth and

recommended to us in the Word of God; and regarded by all that loved and feared his Holy Name. The Most High God, whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, has taken the name HOLY, as his appropriated character. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place;" {Is.57:15;} and he very often uses this phrase, "my Holy Name;" and that in the most sacred manner, to impress reverence and godly fear. And when he brought his first begotten Son into the world; to distinguish him from all other beings, he is called, "that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee" - "thine Holy Child Jesus" - "the Holy One of God." And in many places he is called, "the HOLY ONE;" to show his super-excellency above all other beings. "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." {Ps.89:19} And that Spirit of God, which the Father gave to the Son, without measure; and gives, through the Son, to all his Saints, in measure, to express his eminence, and infinite distance from, and superiority above all other spirits, is called, "the Holy Spirit" - "the Spirit of Holiness." In our translation, he is most commonly called, "the Holy Ghost." {It is a pity, that the old obsolete Gothic word, 'Ghost,' had been retained by our translators; for it is not so expressive, or intelligible, as the word, 'Spirit.}' Thus, the descriptive character, whereby the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinguished from all other beings and manifest to be perfectly ONE is HOLINESS. "There is none holy as the LORD; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any rock like our God." {I Sam.2:2} "I the LORD your God am holy." {Lev.19:2} "Thou only art holy." {Rev.15:4} The account, and description given of the seraphs in Isaiah's vision; standing above {upon} the throne; at whose voice the door posts moved; and by whom the living fire was communicated to the Prophet's lips; can comport with no other, but the Son of God, and the Spirit of

Truth; by whom the glory of the Father is proclaimed; and who perfectly answer to each other, in everything, and are, with the Father, included in the message, on which the Prophet was to be sent. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" They, to manifest the infinite excellency, and superlative glory of the Immortal and Invisible God are represented crying one to another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory;" {Is.6:3;} as if holiness was the very ultimate altitude of all that can be expressed or known of God; or as if it was the highest ascription of glory, that can be given him; as if it were the very climax; that having expressed that word, they could no higher ascend; but repeat the same, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Though the true design of the vision is to express the grand intention of all that is revealed, and performed by the Son of the blessed; and all that is communicated by the Spirit of his grace; that it all centers in this point, to declare the Infinite Holiness of Him, whom Christ calls, "Holy Father." In the New Testament Church, under the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the vital streams of the enriching Comforter; represented in the Book of Revelation, by four living creatures; being brought into the same spirit, and image, express the same language, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." {Rev.4:8} Yea, so holy is the Lord, that everything that proceeds from him, or pertains to him is holy. The writings wherein his will is revealed are the Holy Scriptures; and all his commandments are holy. Every place where his presence dwells is a holy habitation. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." {Zech.2:13} Every place is holy where his presence appears. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." {Ex.3:5} The temple, the ark, the altar, all the utensils, and everything pertaining to the worship were sanctified {rendered holy} by his presence. And the times which the Lord appointed for his people to draw near to him, were holy;

therefore, it is called, "the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD." {Ex.16:23} But we do not conceive that places, vessels, times, &c., are capable of any intrinsic holiness; but the Lord was pleased to sanctify them to his use, and appoint that they should be held in sacred reverence, to teach his people to reverence, to fear and tremble at his presence, and at his holy name; and that they whose hearts were capable of receiving a different kind of holiness, should be sanctified to God, in spirit and in truth. Therefore he says, "ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." For he calls his chosen with an holy calling; dwells in them by the Spirit of his holiness; and creates them, after God, in righteousness, and true holiness; and so they grow, unto an holy temple in the Lord. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" {I Cor.3:16} And to them he says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." {Deut.7:6} And having called them with an holy calling, brought them to himself, and his Spirit dwelling in them, they are made partakers of his holiness. Hence they are called, "holy brethren" – "an holy nation" – "an holy priesthood;" and such they must be, or they cannot stand before this Holy Lord God. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." {Heb.12:14} It may be asked, if God only is holy; how can a man be holy; or, if holiness in God, be of so sublime a nature; what is holiness in man? I reply, that we ought to distinguish well what we read, and attend to the difference, between the very identical thing, and an adjunct, which sometimes bears the name, by reason of its relation to, or dependence on the thing itself. There is a holiness in its kind in everything that relates to God, or to the worship of God. Some places were called holy, because the glory of God appeared there, striking the hearts of those that beheld it with sacred awe, and

reverence of his Majesty. Some things were called holy because they bare some resemblance to, or were figures of the true; or were used in any service, relating to the Holy Lord God. Some things, or persons, were said to be sanctified, and deemed holy, purely because they were separated from things common, and appointed to be employed in things pertaining to God. Sometimes purifying is called sanctifying; though purification and sanctification are perfectly distinct; the former is only putting away filthiness, the latter is to be beautified with Divine Grace; yet the former is called holiness, {"by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified,"} because it is a preparative for the latter. Sometimes a sincere, humble, upright walking in the fear of God is called holiness; because it is presumed to proceed from a principal of holiness in the heart; but, since none is holy except the Lord, if we come to speak of the truth of holiness in man, it is no other than God dwelling in them. "As God have said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." {II Cor.6:16} Hereby is the soul of man sanctified, and made holy to the Lord; and there is not a spark of true holiness, in any being in the creation of God, only what proceeds immediately from God, in consequence of his dwelling in God, and God in him; and so, by vital union with Him that is holy, the soul is made partaker; {by virtue of Divine Imputation, Christ our Representative unto the Father in all the perfection & holiness of his Mediatorial Representation;} of his holiness. "For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." {I Cor.3:17} Now, it is easy to observe, with what awe, submission, reverence, fear and trembling, all those persons, whom the Holy One of Israel hath sanctified through his truth, draw nigh to God, and make mention of his holy name. With what solemnity they speak of his holiness; and what Glory they ascribe to his Inconceivable Excellency. "Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." {Ps.99:3}

“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.” {Ps.99:5} “Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.” {Ps.99:9} And again, “who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods; who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” {Ex.15:11} When exalting his mighty works, and wonders of grace, they come to this conclusion, “He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant forever; holy and reverend is his name.” {Ps.111:9} And they admonish one another, “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” {Ps.29:2} And again, “Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” {Ps.30:4} And again, “Glory ye in his holy name.” {I Chron.16:10} And when the prophet had spoken of the rich blessings, and the most glorious things to the Church; he resolves them all into this, “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” {Is.12:6} Thus it appears, how all the Saints have revered, adored, magnified, and rejoiced in the holiness of the glorious Lord God; and if these things, duly attended to, do not furnish us with expressions fully to declare, nor yet enable us to form perfect conceptions of the holiness of our God; they are sufficient to fill us with profound reverence, joy, and admiration. This was the motto worn in the crown of the high priest, in the tabernacle; and now under the Gospel, that all the saints are kings and priests; it is the motto worn by every believer in Jesus: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. John Johnson {Son of God on the Throne of Judgment, 1776}