

HOLINESS.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14.

Seeing the cold, lifeless formality that increasingly prevails in the Nominal Church, the evident lack of growth in grace, and its growing disposition to imbibe the spirit and conform to the customs, ideas, etc., of the world, many of God's children, still fettered in a measure by her supposed divine authority, are becoming interested in what is generally termed the holiness movement. Holiness meetings, holiness camp-meetings, conventions, etc., as well as holiness periodicals, are becoming quite common.

That the movement is one actuated by right motives, and measurably in the right direction, we do not question; yet, were these courageous enough to cast off all the slavish fetters of Babylon, and to walk out fearlessly into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, trusting in him alone, they would come much nearer the true idea of holiness. Holiness means a setting apart, sanctifying, separating from the world, by divine authority, and for the accomplishment of the divine purposes. That holiness means separation from the world all will agree, though few consult the Scriptures sufficiently to know to what intent the Lord would have them separate.

May we not be separate from the world and still be far from the narrow path to which we have been called? The class termed holiness, people generally believe that their single aim should be to so subdue sin in themselves as to be able to stand approved of God, being in *complete* conformity to all his requirements in thought, word and deed. Some claim to have reached this desirable perfection, while others, painfully conscious of their weakness and discouraged by their repeated efforts and failures, are almost in despair of ever reaching it. And not discerning the Lord's purpose in calling them to separation

from the world, they fall into the error of looking upon these efforts as a means to their salvation. Many become self-righteous and boastful of their attainments, and consequent hopes of salvation, while the more humble discouraged almost lose faith in God and entertain but a faint indefinite hope of salvation.

After all the lessons given, it should be plain to all that no imperfect man is able to keep blamelessly God's perfect law. The law is the full measure of a *perfect* man's ability, and Adam and Jesus were the only perfect men, and hence the only two who *could* keep it. Israel tried it for nearly two thousand years, and though that people have furnished us many worthy examples, not one of them was able to merit life by keeping the law, save Jesus only. The very object of the giving of the law to men who were unable to keep it, was to convince of shortcomings, and to lead to trust in Christ, alone, for salvation. It is only self-deception to claim actual perfection, though the weakest child of God clothed with the imputed merit of Christ, is *reckoned* perfect by our Father.

This trusting in the merit of Christ, and striving to live in exact harmony with his revealed will, which implies the diligent searching of the Scriptures to know what that will is, is the true life of holiness – of separation from the world – and of union and communion with God. Such cannot help bearing fruit.

It should be borne in mind that the statement of Heb. 12:14 is addressed to the Church. The Church were taught to look for the Lord's appearing, which Paul explained would be in a manner unobserved by the world, and as a thief in the night. When his presence is due, only those will be able to see (Gr., *horao* – discern) it who are separate from **[R714 : page 5]** the world in spirit, and who are searching the Scriptures to know the signs of his presence. Without holiness [separation, setting apart to God's service] no man shall see [discern] the Lord.

But a time shall come when many who are not holy will discern the Lord's presence; for we are told that "every eye shall see him." The world will see – recognize him, when his judgments make his presence manifest to all. Isa. 26:9.

This text has very frequently been misused in urging the world to become Christians. Christian people who have not carefully considered its meaning tell the world that without holiness they shall not see the Lord; and then, when controverting the truth as to the manner of Christ's coming, the very same class will confidently quote, "Every eye shall see him." Do they believe that all shall become holy? No; this is far from their thought. Where then is the harmony? Is there discord in the statements of God's word? To believe so is to believe the Scriptures unsound and unworthy of confidence. But such is the sad confusion into which the teaching of the nominal church has led, and such the results which its too careless handling of the word of God has brought about. The confusion is fast ripening into open infidelity.

May God help those of his children who are still within her to see her confusion, and then courageously to come out and pursue holiness, without which no man shall now be able to discern the Lord's presence.

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