

## HOLINESS

By Rev. Francis E. Pond

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as having once said while running for office, "There is one among all my adversaries and competitors whom I fear more than all the others. He is Abraham Lincoln." He gave expression to a great truth. One has well said: "Of all the foes we are called upon to meet, the foe within is the worst." Many a man has conquered all his enemies only to meet defeat by himself. Alexander and Napoleon were defeated by their lusts and ambitions. Solomon voiced a great truth in his terse statement: "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." Legions have been defeated in their life purpose by their own native disposition, that is, the carnal nature.

Ezekiel Hopkins once wrote: "Our corruption has made us such combustible matter that there is scarce a dart thrown at us in vain." The enemy within is the chief cause of all our defeats, humiliation, and shame." St. Paul exhorts us to "cast out the bondwoman and her son." Freedom from inward sin, a clean heart, will make us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Holiness is therefore the mainspring of the Christian life. The sin-principle is the occasion of much disturbance among the followers of Christ. It necessitates a fight to keep the victory, "lest Satan should get an advantage of us." It is impossible to possess tranquility of mind, and make undisturbed progress in the divine life, as long as a condition of heart remains that upon the least temptation may kindle a fire that is hard to quench. But where love abounds to the exclusion of all sin steady growth is possible, and a victorious life is assured.

Holiness is also a prerequisite to a worthwhile revival. It would be contrary to fact to insist that holiness is a never-failing guarantee of revivals. Revivals no doubt would generally follow if the people who make up the membership of the churches would seek the experience of holiness and live in its enjoyment. But so often many unwise things are done by those professing holiness, and such unwise attitudes are assumed that prove to be such hindrances as to almost make revivals an impossibility. Moreover, the people in some communities take an unreasonable attitude against the church, and are so filled with unbelief that a revival is impossible. Unbelief hindered Jesus in His work to some extent (Matthew 13:58). Nevertheless, where the people can be induced to go in for cleansing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a revival to some extent can reasonably be expected.

Then, again, a holy people are a witnessing people. Jesus, when brought before Pilate, "witnessed a good confession." Peter, in his pentecostal sermon, spoke of the resurrection of Jesus, saying: "We all are witnesses." The ritualism of the temple service gave place to testimony in the Christian church. A spiritual people have always been a witnessing people. In the days before the Christian era the Lord had those who spoke in His name, and told abroad what He had done for them. Said the Psalmist, "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: Then spake I with my tongue." Jeremiah declared that "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

St. Paul "was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." "Apollos," it is said, "Mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Witnessing is God's way of making Himself known to the world. The burning testimony, from the heart of a righteous person whose walk is correct and whose heart is cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit, is effective in bringing sinners under conviction. This is the New Testament plan.

Holiness not only enriches the saints, but it also contributes to the welfare of the world in general. Spiritual religion has ever blazed the trail for civilization, stable government, social decency, and commerce. It has always been the patron of learning, invention and progress. Real estate is evaluated according to the spiritual condition of the community in which it is found. A little Free Methodist Church in the State of Idaho was once photographed and used in Congress as an argument favoring a large reclamation project in which vast sums of money were involved. It argued the stability and reliability of the people in that place. It was an evidence that the people were there, not as speculators, but as homemakers, and Congress made the desired appropriation.

Notwithstanding the fact of the value of the church to the community, the worldly-minded are afraid of holiness, because it is the enemy of a worldly, selfish program. Holiness has the interests of the whole of society in view, and not that of the few, privileged people who are generally in the saddle. The religion of Christ exalts the lowly and humbles the great, "that," as the apostle said, "there may be equality." Holiness knows no classes, and makes no distinctions. Neither race, color, nor station makes any difference with the Lord. He made them all and looks upon all alike. Holiness reveals "the hidden things of dishonesty." It brings to light the ugly ulcers that fester and thrive in darkness. It denounces corruption in business and politics. Therefore the world fears and hates it. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

The Jews hated Jesus because He was a menace to their interests. They "compassed sea and land to make" proselytes, hoping thereby to become strong enough to overcome the Romans and make of themselves the ruling people of the world. They realized that Jesus was a world character and dealt with humanity on a world scale. He could not be tethered to an age or a climate or a culture or a civilization. There was a spaciousness about Him that knew no East or West, that matched humanity. This they did not like, and were afraid of. "If we let Him thus alone," they said, "all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Ah, yes! He was opposed to selfishness, and selfishness was stirred in opposition to Him.

Narrow selfishness is what prompted a Roman priest to criticize President Hoover for urging the people to observe the prohibition law. He based his objection to the President's exhortation upon the ground that he had no right to deal with a moral issue. Another priest attempted to chasten the President for sending greetings to a conference of a certain Protestant denomination, insisting that it was an insult to many millions of American citizens for the President to con-

gratulate a great religious group upon what they had done to promote American ideals and institutions. It was no doubt, as has been suggested, the historical content of the President's message which disturbed the Romanists, who so singularly fail to appreciate the American spirit. The attack made upon true holiness has for its basis a fear of its influence. The godless know that the exposure of their evil doings will jeopardize their security, and make it more difficult, if not impossible, to exploit the unprivileged. Their belief is well founded. The influence of our holy religion has taken the yoke from the neck of the slaves, exalted womanhood, glorified childhood, and emancipated men, those who yield to Christ, from the thralldom of sin. It is exercising a beneficent influence in industrialism, taking its place squarely on the side of the working man, insisting that he "is a man for a' that."

What it has accomplished is a prophecy of what it will yet achieve. This is realized by those who love sin and delight themselves in works of iniquity. Therefore they are afraid of it and opposed to it. But the world's opposition to holiness is its own dirge. Well may the saints recite the pæan of St. Paul: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Holiness will win.—The Free Methodist.

## SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

By Rev. A. J. McKinney

After all other qualifications for soul-winning are received there is superimposed as the crowning qualification for the commission of the responsibility of the interests of the kingdom of God, the endowment or endowment of spiritual liberty. Without freedom any accomplishment is retarded. Only free men may reach commendable execution of superior or ideal tasks. Gospel liberty is most prominent in the public ministry of eminent soul winners. Sin, and a sinful life, is contractive, binding, confining, imprisoning. This bondage is consciously present in most lives. Souls long for a liberty they know not how or where to find. When they see and sense it in men of religion, they are drawn thereto. In fact, the sinner auditor must discover in the environing atmosphere the antithesis of all the several phases of his unhappy life. Contrasting with his sadness he must see the joy of saints; against his defeat must be seen the victory of twice-born men; as opposite to his midnight darkness shall see the light of the glory of God; as diverse from his despair he must feel the beginnings of hope; and as a most desirable acquirement he must see and sense the freedom, liberty and assurance of the Christian. A ministry of dry desertations, or tame enunciation of a system of duties repellent to the natural man, will be ineffectual in winning souls. "And they spake the word of God with boldness"—liberty, freedom. And many were added to the church. A most prominent feature of the Day of Pentecost was their spiritual liberty. And so must be the atmosphere on other days of Pentecost, when many shall be saved.—The Free Methodist.

"Though you and I are very little beings, we must not rest satisfied until we have made our influence extend to the remotest corner of this ruined world."—Samuel J. Mills.

Christian Witness