

Phariseism and THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

by D. N. Thomas

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20).

Dr W. B. Godbey says that "The Pharisees were the holiness movement of the Jewish church." At first reading we did not like the comparison, but as it was made by a great scholar, let us give it consideration and try to note the marks of resemblance between these two groups.

The Pharisees were the most religious people of their day. They made professions of superior piety. They said long prayers. They thanked God that they were not like the rest of mankind. They were in a class by themselves. They did few of the wicked things that others did. They were the strictest sect of their time in keeping the Sabbath, in paying tithes, and in observing regular times of religious activities. They taught such a servile adherence to the letter of the law that the spirit of it was overlooked. They multiplied minute precepts to such an extent that the weightier matters of justice, mercy, humility, and faith were lost sight of.

No amount of zeal, activity or strict views can substitute for the essential principles of virtue, righteousness and love to God and man. Of course we should dress in modest apparel, but we must also make sure that we have on the robe of righteousness. We should not "adorn (ourselves) with gold, or pearls, or costly array," but we should be very sure that we are adorned with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." Whether your dress is black or white, make sure that your heart is white, and that you have the love that suffereth long and is kind. Note carefully how you react under pressure, and when others disagree with you—this is the real test. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The Pharisees majored in minors. They were straight-laced and exact in trifles, and were lax in other things. They made the outside look good, but did not concern themselves about having the inside made clean.

Some under plain preaching conform outwardly to the standards of holiness without having worldliness taken out of their hearts, then when they are with a worldly group again they conform to the world. The thing was in their hearts all the time. They dressed like pilgrims, but were not so at heart. The Holy Spirit wants to correct the trouble at its source. Pride is not a skin disease—it is a heart disease. Pharisees regard their traditions as sacred as the written oracles. A tradition is a custom or practice handed down from one generation to another, but is not required by the Scriptures. We may have forms, services, or customs which are traditional and which do not constitute vital religion. They are only the shell. The real kernel of religion is love and devotion to God. It is possible to have the shell without the kernel.

The Pharisees substituted notions for convictions. A religious conviction is a persuasion based upon the clear teaching of the Scriptures, while a notion is one's opinion, idea or whim, and may be right or wrong. If we have notions which may not be sustained by the plain teaching of the Scriptures, we should have them to ourselves and not try to impose them upon others. The Pharisees were harsh in their judgment of those who did not conform to their notions. In minor details of conduct and belief, some latitude should be allowed for the individual conscience to settle. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth."

If Satan cannot get one to be a liberal compromiser, he will try to get him to go to the other extreme and be a harsh, sour radical. He does not care how strict one is

so long as he is lacking in love. He will not concern himself about what gifts one may have so long as he can keep him from the more excellent way. The Pharisees were exclusive. The name means "separated," and in one sense they lived up to the name. They avoided, so far as possible, contact with any but their own. They found fault with Jesus because He associated with publicans and sinners. Jesus had compassion on the multitude, and saw them scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. He went wherever He could help one. The Pharisees would likely be called the fundamentalists, and the Sadducees the liberals of their day. Much of the religion of the present day would not exceed theirs.

While we keep free from liberalism, let us also guard against that type of ultra-conservatism which lacks charity, a passion for souls, and the fruit of the Spirit. It requires prayerful study to rightly divide the word of truth, that the proper emphasis may be given to doctrine, to experience, and to consistent practice. Then we shall be well-balanced Christians.

—"Free Methodist"

THE DOXOLOGY

Many are there who would feel that a worship service would not be complete without "The Doxology." Some use it to begin the worship, others use it when the offering is gathered. Especially is it used in the more formal and liturgical services of worship.

By a doxology is meant a short hymn full of direct praise to God. All of our hymns are employed, to some degree, as praise to him. But in a doxology the praise is the dominant feature, it occupies the whole hymn—as may be noted.

"Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Observed closely, one sees that the first line speaks of God as the fountain of "all blessings." It reminds us that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."

The second line calls upon all his creatures that are upon the earth to praise him. This reminds one of Psalm 148, where the sea monsters and the lightnings, the mountains and the forests, the beasts and the birds are summoned to unite with all ranks and conditions of men in giving homage of praise to their Creator.

The third line exhorts the heavenly host to join the universal chorus. This corresponds to the first half of Psalm 148, which calls upon the hosts of angels and hosts of stars to adore the name of Jehovah.

And the fourth line reminds us that God is to be praised as the Trinity, as the Three-in-One-God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The famous verse of praise was written by Thomas Ken, a bishop of the Church of England. He was born in 1637, shortly after the translation of the King James Version of our Bible and died in 1711. He served as bishops whom James 11 sent as prisoners to the Tower. He is reported to have been a man of "rare piety and sweetness of spirit as well as fearless courage." He rebuked Charles 11 on his death bed for the wicked life he lived and urged him to repent. He was one of seven bishops whom James 11 sent as prisoners to the Tower of London, because they refused to read from the pulpit a royal notice called "The Declaration of Indulgence."

Bishop Ken was said to be a great preacher. But no one now reads or knows about his sermons. Yet he continues to live through the Doxology. In one of his

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