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GODLINESS

CHAPTER 15: HINDRANCES TO HOLINESS – V

I SHALL try, in the short time I may occupy, to go straight to the point—to some of the difficulties and hindrances which I know are keeping not a few here today out of the enjoyment of the blessing. I know there are some here who are satisfied that this blessing is attainable, who are satisfied that God can thus keep them, as we have been singing, if they were to lean the whole weight of their need—their soul, and body, and spirit—upon Him, and trust Him. They believe He could, and they believe He would. They have come to perceive that it is not at all a question of human strength, or human weakness, or human knowledge, but that it is simply a matter of Divine strength, fully recognised and fully trusted by human weakness. Therefore, there is no more a stumbling-block in their way about reckoning themselves holier than other people, or stronger than other people, for they recognise themselves as the very weakest and most sinful Of ALL people; but they have come to understand this blessing to be, human weakness leaning with all its weight upon Divine power; and they believe God does thus save and keep those people who do thus lean. Then, what hinders? There they stand, just where the Israelites stood, when they might have gone in and possessed the good land. "They entered not in because of unbelief," and for that unbelief there is a reason—a cause. They dare not venture their souls on this Divine power, because there is back in their consciousness some difficulty, some obstacle, something which is only known to themselves and the Holy Ghost, which prevents them doing this.

When they try to jump on to the Divine strength there is something that holds them back, and they cannot make the spring. They try to forget it—they sing, and pray, and seek to make themselves believe there is nothing, and they come up again and again right to the entrance of the goodly land, and then they try to spring in. Some of you will today, but you will not be able to spring, because there is something holding you back; and you are conscious of it, but will not allow yourselves to realize it. Now this is the point: when my dear husband read that passage, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken," I thought, Oh! what was involved in that prayer—what does that mean? WHY did the glory come? Why did the Holy Ghost overshadow them? Why were they filled with God—so filled that they had to go down and could not help themselves, but went into the streets and poured it out upon the godless multitudes around them? WHY, WHY did it come? Why do hundreds of assemblies of God's people meet and pray, but nothing comes? They hold long meetings, and make long prayers, and sing,



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"We are waiting for the fire;"

but nothing comes. Why did it come on that particular occasion? Because in that prayer was thorough, entire, everlasting self-abandonment. They came up caring for nothing but pleasing God and doing as He bade them; and the Holy Ghost alone knows when a soul arrives at that point. He will never come till the Soul DOES arrive at that point. This is the deficiency, I am satisfied, with hundreds. There they stand, right on the borders of the glory-land, but there is some wedge of gold, or Babylonish garment that they buried years ago.

They won't think about it. They say 'Oh, it is nought, nought! That little thing would not hinder, it is so long ago.' They would not, when they knew they ought, dig it up and burn it before the Lord. If this is so with any here, you must dig it up, or the Holy Ghost will never come. A lady, a short time ago, was brought up to the very edge of this blessing, but there was something she felt she ought to do. She had a sum of money which she felt ought to be given up to a certain object. She prayed and struggled, and attended prayer-meetings, and prayed long into the night; but, no, she would not face the difficulty. She said, 'Oh! no; I am not satisfied in my own mind. How do I know God wants it for that purpose?' She might have struggled till now if she had not made up her mind to obey; but, the moment she did—alone, up in her bedroom—the blessing came. A gentleman came up to the penitent form, after one of my West-end services, last season, and told me: 'I am a preacher. I have been labouring in the Gospel for eight years, But I know I am utterly destitute of this power.' Do you want it?' 'Oh!' he said, 'I do;' and he looked as though he were sincere. 'Then,' I said, 'what is it? There is a hindrance. It is not God's fault. He wants you to have it. He is as willing to give you the Spirit as He was Peter or Paul, and you want to have it. Now, will you have it? Have you understood the conditions?' 'Ah!' he said, 'that is the point.' 'Now, you know I should be a false comforter if I were to try to make you believe you were right when you had not yielded that point.' 'Well,' he said, 'you see, it would be cutting loose from one's entire circle.' Ah! he was led, you see, by Christian friends. I said, 'Did not the Lord Jesus cut loose from His circle to save you? and, if your Christian friends are such that to live a holy life you must cut loose from them, what are you going to do—stop in that circle, ruin your own soul, and help to ruin them, or cut loose and help to save them?' Oh! there is no profounder philosophy in any text in the Bible than that—"How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" You will have to come to God not caring what anybody thinks.

As a dear lady, who is going through floods of persecution for Jesus, said, 'I don't care if they turn



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their backs on me, and never speak to me any more, and cast me out, and my children too. I don't care if I can only have His presence and follow Him.' When you come to that you will get this pearl.

I know a father and mother who want this blessing, especially the mother. They have a family of beautiful little children, but the father says, 'What are we going to do for our children? It is a very serious matter cutting loose from our circle.' A gentleman said to me, 'I have to do SOMETHING for my sons. What am I do?' 'No,' I said, 'you have got to do nothing for your sons. You have to train them for God, and leave GOD TO DO FOR THEM, and He is well able to look after His own. That is your business; train them for God, and leave God to find a niche for them, and if He can't on earth, I warrant you He will in Heaven.' People have things wrong way up now-a-days. They have the notion that they have to do this, that, and the other, for themselves and their children, instead of accepting it as their great commission that they have to propagate and push along and extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, to seek His kingdom and His righteousness, and leave Him to look after their interests. When you come to this it will soon be done.

A FRAGMENT

Love Him, Trust Him, Him alone; Father, Keeper, Three in One.

Saviour, Master, Leader too, Lover, Brother, ALL to you.

Fear not; Care not; Only follow His way, This day And tomorrow.

Waiting, Working, For His sake; Watching, Hoping, Till daybreak.

Peaceful, joyful, In His peace; Filled full, kept full, By His grace.

From a series of papers by Catherine Booth published in 1881.