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GODLINESS

CHAPTER 14: HOLINESS – IV

I THINK, dear friends, that I have only a very few words to say to you this morning. I am, as it were, holding on to God for power by which to say them, so that they should sink into your hearts and produce some immediate and permanent results in your lives. I believe the Lord is not only grieved and disappointed, but I believe He is angry, when His people meet, and talk, and sing, and pray, and then go away without any definite result having been reached—without ever having given anything to Him, or received anything from Him. I believe He feels with respect to us, just as He felt with respect to His people of old, when He said, 'Why come ye and cover My altar with tears?' As though He said, 'You know what I want you to do; come and do it; and, when you do it, I will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing.'

My heart ached at what a lady told me this morning before I came into this Hall. She said, 'A friend of mine remarked, "You don't mean to say that you are going to call 4,000 people together to cry for the Holy Ghost?"' She said, 'Yes, I do.' 'Well, it makes me frightened. What if anything should happen; if something should be done?' Would to God something would happen; would to God something might be done that should frighten somebody. But oh! what did that reveal? Depths of infidelity and unbelief; and yet people wonder that infidelity is increasing. Is it any wonder that infidels are laughing us to scorn? Is it any wonder that at Christian Evidence Societies men get up and say that the Christian system has become effete? No wonder when that is the state of heart of the Lord's people.

People meet together, and pray, and talk and sing, "Whiter than snow," and they don't believe it any more than do the heathen. They pray for the Holy Ghost, and do not so much as believe there is a Holy Ghost. They ask God to do something, when they never knew Him to do anything, and don't expect He ever will. The world is dying because of this unreality, and being damned by it.

Josephine Butler says, about France, "France is waiting for a reality;" and so is England, and so is the world waiting for a reality. God help us to make some real people. You believe, some of you, that nothing is going to happen. You don't believe that God is going to do anything—so He won't in your experience. If you had lived at Nazareth, do you think Jesus Christ would have done anything for you? He would not. If you had been deaf and dumb, you would have remained so, for He could not have done any mighty works in you because of your unbelief! He is the same now; and if you don't



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expect Him to do anything, brother, He will not. But some of us do expect Him to do something. Some of us believe He is going to do something, and that by this little stone cut out of the mountain, without hands, He intends to raise a great kingdom. Jesus Christ is not going to be disappointed, and allow the Devil to chuckle in His face for ever, and say, 'I have cheated You out of Your inheritance.' We will do something or die in attempting it.

After all, what does God want with us? He wants us just to be, and to do. He wants us to be like His Son, and then to do as His Son did; and when we come to that He will shake the world through us. People say, 'You can't be like His Son.' Very well, then, you will never get any more than you believe for. If I did not think Jesus Christ strong enough to destroy the works of the Devil and to bring us back to God's original pattern, I would throw the whole thing up for ever. What! He has given us a religion we cannot practice? I say, No, He has not come to mock us. What! He has given us a Saviour who cannot save? Then I decline to have anything to do with Him. What! Does He profess to do for me what He cannot? No, no, no. He "is not a man, that He should lie: neither the Son of Man, that He should repent:" and I tell you that His scheme of Salvation is two-sided—it is Godward and manward. It contemplates me as well as it contemplates the great God. It is not a scheme of salvation merely—it is a scheme of restoration. If he cannot restore me, He must damn me. If he cannot heal me, and make me over again, and restore me to the pattern He intended me to be, He has left Himself no choice.

I challenge anybody to disprove by the Bible that He proposes to restore me—brain, heart, soul, spirit, body, every fibre of my nature—to restore me perfectly, to conform me wholly to the image of His Son. If He could have saved me without restoring me, then He could have saved me without a Saviour at all. How do you read your Bibles? How do you read the history of the miracles—the stories of His opening the eyes, unstopping the ears, cleansing the leper, and raising the dead? The Lord show us how to read it. He will heal you if you will let Him. These are the sort of words the world wants—the living words, living embodiments of Christianity, walking embodiments of the Spirit, and life and power of Jesus Christ. You may scatter Bibles, as you have done, all over the world. You may preach, and sing, and talk, and do what you will; but, if you don't exhibit to the people living epistles, show them the transformation of character and life in yourself which is brought about by the power and grace of God—if you don't go to them and do the works of Jesus Christ, you may go on preaching, and the world will get worse and worse, and the Church, too. We want a living embodiment of Christianity. We want JESUS TO COME IN THE FLESH AGAIN.



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Did you ever notice the tense in that passage—"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is come in the flesh!"—not that He did come once upon a time, but that He is come now. Oh! how people hate "Jesus Christ in the flesh." You may be ever so devout, ever so Pharisaic, till you come to Jesus in the flesh, and then they will gnash on you with their teeth as they gnashed on Christ. They can't resist such people. This is what the World wants—holy people; and nothing else will do. We have tried everything else. You Christian people from other divisions of the Lord's forces, you have tried Bibles, and preaching, and singing, and services, and Sunday-schools. I have been lately to a part of the country where they told me that nearly every member of the population had passed through their Sunday-schools, and yet there are men there who will drag a young girl down a flight of stone stairs and kick her till she is black and blue. The great mass of the people who took part in the Lancashire Riots have passed through your Sunday-schools.

Now, I say, God is speaking to you in these things, if only you will hear Him, and He is saying that the letter killeth, that circumcision, and baptism, and forms, and ceremonies, and going to chapel, and Bible reading is all nothing, when there is no Holy Ghost in it. You want a real, living embodiment of Christianity over again, and if The Salvation Army is not going to be that, may God put it out! I would be willing to pronounce the funeral oration of The Army if I did not believe it was going to be that. The world is dying for this.

I was so touched, yesterday, by hearing a story from Paris, told by a young woman who has returned, and was telling me about my precious child. The story was this: A woman came, one morning, and asked for the lady. They tried to put her off, and asked, 'Will not some one else do?' 'No,' said the woman; 'I do want to see the lady herself.' They said, 'You can't see her today—she is too ill!' 'Then,' she said, 'when can I see her?' They appointed a time the next afternoon, and then this poor woman came, and she told this story: 'I did hear, six years ago, that there was somebody could take the devil out. Now, see, I have got a devil in, and he do make me wicked and miserable, and I do want him taken out, and I've been running about these six years to find somebody who could pull him out. I've been to lots of priests, but they could not pull him out, because they had a devil in them; and, you see, when there's a devil in me and a devil in them, we got to fighting, and they could not pull him out.' What a comment on, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Of course, nobody can put a devil out who has a devil in them. The poor old woman's sense told her this. 'And,' she continued, 'a gentleman told me that this lady who has come here is able to pull him out, and I have come to her to do it, for I do want him pulled out.' Oh, yes! I thought that is what poor humanity wants all the world over. THEY WANT PEOPLE WHO CAN CAST THE DEVIL OUT—people who have



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in them Holy Ghost power to do it. Oh! will you be such an one?

'Where is God?' someone said to me the other day, in agony. 'Where is God?' Where, indeed! 'Why does He not show Himself? Why does He not do something?' That lady was afraid something would happen when 4,000 met together to beseech the Holy Ghost. Why not? You say He has not changed. Your creed says so. You say He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. You say the needs of the world are as great. You say His great, benevolent heart, beats for His fallen, sinful, erring human family. You say He loves us. You are always talking about His love. What is the reason He does not do something for us, and come down in the same plenitude of spiritual power as He did at Pentecost? Why? Only because you are not as given up to Him and as willing to let Him do it as the people were in former times. You have not accounted all things dung and dross. You have not thrown everything into the scale, and, therefore, He will not thus baptize you with the Holy Ghost. These are the people that the world wants—people of one idea—Christ, and Him crucified. For Christ's sake, give up quibbling.

I said to a lady who had got this blessing when somebody got at her and began with this verse and that verse, and this translation and that translation, 'Mind you don't begin to reason: you will lose your blessing,' and she did lose it. You can't know it by understanding. Oh! if the world could have known it by understanding, what a deal they would have known. But He despises all your philosophy. It is not by understanding, but by faith! If ever you know God it will be by faith, becoming as a little child—opening your mouth, and saying, 'Lord, pour in;' and then your quibbles and difficulties will be gone, and you will see holiness, sanctification, purity, perfect love, burning out on every page of God's Word. I weep before God, I feel almost more than I can bear, over this awful knack that some people seem to have of plucking the bread out of the children's mouths when they are just getting an appetite for it. The Lord have mercy on them! If you don't come in yourselves, for Christ's sake don't keep other people out.

A minister—a devoted, good man—was trying to show me that this sanctification was too big to be got and kept. I said, 'My dear sir, how do you know? If another man has faith to march up to Jesus Christ and say, 'Here, I see this in your Book; you have promised this to me; now then, Lord, I have faith to take it:' mind you don't measure His privilege by your faith. Do you think the Church has come up to His standard of privilege and obligation? I don't. It has many marches to make yet. Mind you don't hinder anybody.' The law of the kingdom all the way through to your dying moment will be "According to your faith." If you want this blessing, put down your quibbles, put your feet on your



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arguments, march up to the throne and ask for it, and kill, and crucify, and cast from you the accursed thing which hinders it, and then you shall have it, and the Lord will fill you this morning with His power and glory, and something will happen, and this Exeter Hall will be consecrated to soul-saving and to soul-sanctifying power today. The Lord grants it.

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