

HOLINESS REQUIRED IN MISSION WORK.



WOULD it not be very interesting to read the thoughtful answers given by each reader of the PALM BRANCH if asked the question, What did the blessed Saviour mean when He issued the command "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Some would no doubt say: to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is quite impossible. But would Jesus command us to do impossibilities? Surely not. Let us try and see what He did mean. We know that the eternal God in His infinite holiness and attributes is far beyond any human imitation. He has a holiness and perfection all His own. So we, according to our ability must have a perfection of character attainable to the humanity redeemed by the Saviour, who purchased by His death our restoration to the favor and image of God, in whose image we were first created. Jesus is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. While in these imperfect bodies we shall never be perfect in knowledge or in judgment, but looking to Jesus, trusting Him and trying to obey His commands, God accepts our feeble efforts and we may be preserved blameless and at last presented faultless. We read of Job, Noah, of Asa and others who were called perfect men, but there were many things in their lives which were faulty. Evidently their judgment and knowledge were imperfect and they made many mistakes, but if with our best energies we seek to know and do God's will, trusting in Jesus our righteousness, we "shall not come into condemnation." Our blessed Saviour said, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." His last command to His disciples was to go into all the world and teach all nations. The margin says, "make Christians of all nations." How we value the last words of our dear friends, just as they are leaving us. The disciples followed about their blessed Master after He had been restored to them from the grave, and treasured up every word that fell from His lips. On that memorable ascension day He led them out as far as Bethany, speaking to them of things pertaining to His kingdom and giving them His last commands. He knew they were at best but weak, imperfect men, but He promised them, if they were obedient, that power from the Holy Ghost should be given them, rendering them abundantly able to accomplish all that He required of them. They were to remain in Jerusalem in prayer and supplication until the promised power was bestowed upon them. They were to go forth into Samaria and all Judea, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. How little those

loving disciples seemed to realize what was immediately to follow, but as their adored Master was speaking, lifting up those blessed nail-pierced hands in blessing and benediction, solemnly and silently He arose before their astonished gaze, until a cloud received Him out of their sight. While thus standing in awe-stricken wonder, suddenly two bright-winged angels appeared in their midst, who with comforting words assured them, that as they had thus seen Him ascend into Heaven, so in like manner He would come again. As their precious Master had been restored to them from the dead, they seemed ever after to have carried about with them the thought that He would again ere long reappear. So they went to Jerusalem as He had directed, and continued in prayer and supplication, until the promised Holy Spirit was given them, after which they went forth into all the then known world, preaching the gospel news, and multitudes by thousands, were won for Christ. While believers thus continued working under the power of the Holy Ghost, how were they blessed and what wonderful success attended their efforts. Had this state of things but continued, how soon the whole world would have been reached, and as the nations increased the apostolic doctrine of Jesus and Him crucified, would have continued to spread, until heathenism and Paganism would have been unknown. But alas! as we read in St. John's appeal to the churches in Asia, in the last chapters of the Revelations, we find they relapsed into Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference, overcome by the love of the world and worldly riches and honors, until bereft of the Spirit's power, as in the dark ages the nations sank into idolatry and heathenism, and now how many millions have never even heard of the name of Jesus. Thank God, in these later days the Holy Spirit is again working, and our missionary societies are seeking by His power to obey these last commands of our risen Lord. Wesley said, that God raised up the Methodist church in order to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the world. Oh how long have we neglected to fulfil this divine purpose. How many have gone down to everlasting death while we have delayed? My dear sisters, shall the blood of souls be found on our skirts? Let us arise and do all we can to hasten this soul saving work. But nothing can be done without the power of the Holy Spirit. It is still ours if we seek it as did the early disciples, waiting upon God in believing prayer and holy consecration. Thank God for those who have thus consecrated themselves, and are bearing the burden and heat of the day; but how many stand aloof as though they cared for none of these things. Oh if the thousands of our churches were thus anointed by the Holy Ghost, how many of our young people in their youthful strength and vigor would be offering for distant fields, while those at home would all aid by prayers and offerings and every effective effort, until speedily the kingdoms of this earth would become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

C. Koss.