

DO WE UN-CHRISTIANIZE THOSE WHO OPPOSE THIS DISTINCTIVE TYPE OF HOLINESS?

A prompt, all-comprehensive answer can scarcely be given to this question, for reasons which will appear further on. We claim that this is the revival of the identical type of holiness which commenced on the day of Pentecost, and of which the "Acts of the Apostles" is the real history.

Now this contention is either true or false. If false, then the conduct of professed Christians towards us must be judged by the precepts of Christ, which describe what the conduct of the spiritual should be toward an erring brother. If there is displayed the true spirit of the Master, which endeavors to restore those who have gone astray, in the spirit of meekness, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted, then for us to un-Christianize our opponents because of these efforts is wrong, for two reasons: (1) They are really illustrating Christ's teaching in their conduct, and (2) they are not wrong in the meantime in proclaiming it as a fact that we have gone astray. But, even admitting we are wrong, any attitude or conduct on the part of opponents or critics which is clearly contrary to the spirit of the teachings of Christ, of itself un-Christianizes them as certainly as if that attitude or conduct was displayed against those who were in the right.

The Samaritans, we all admit, were wrong in refusing common hospitality to Christ and His disciples, and the apostles were perfectly right in condemning them therefor; but they were wrong, according to the distinct showing of Christ, when they showed an un-Christ-like spirit in their just condemnation of those who did the wrong.

So it is evident that the rightness or wrongness of our distinctive teaching or experiences in no wise affects the quality of the actions of opponents. To prove us heretics will not justify the slightest deviation from the laws of strict justice or Christ-taught long-suffering kindness. For still the law of Christ is binding on all. "Ye also ought to lay down your lives for the brethren."

But un-Christ-like conduct necessarily un-Christianizes him who is guilty of it. Hence it follows, that charging an opponent with improper conduct is tantamount to un-Christianizing him till that wrong-doing is rectified. A man cheats me in a horse trade. When I charge him with the fraud I virtually un-Christianize him, although he may be a professor of holiness or a minister of the Gospel; and, moreover, I continue to un-Christianize him, of necessity, until he brings forth fruits meet for repentance. Just so if one honestly believes me to be heretical and injurious to the visible Church, if he makes this his excuse for un-Christian conduct towards me, either in failing to be just towards me, or in exemplifying the love of Christ in his conduct when I am concerned, when I mention his injustice, or truthfully characterize his want of the spirit of Christ, I necessarily, in my thoughts, make it impossible that he can be a Christian, according to the Saviour's definition of that term, until there is not only a change in conduct, but also the past has been properly rectified.

These positions, thus brought out with some minuteness, must, we think, be accepted by all who make even a superficial study of the precepts of the great Head of the Church.

But we may be wrong in our judgments. Certainly, this *may* be attaches itself to all we do and say; and yet the positiveness that we are right in these, our several views or deliverances, may be as great as our positiveness of belief in the resurrection. But if our contention is a correct one, and we really and truly are illustrating the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and teaching His sublime truths, what then?

This one thing is certain, according to the plain, unmistakable words of Christ, that the conduct of our opponents is recorded in heaven exactly as if it were done against Christ Himself. There is no escape whatever from this conclusion if the premise is true. Hence it follows, also, that if such opponents had lived in the days of Christ's humanity they would have included Him in their opposition.

Now, with such logical connection be-