



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

Choose Ye This Day

A Message to Holiness People

by S. D. Herron

Men who would go with God must make a choice. It has ever been so, and today we face it very definitely. We are constantly coming to the dividing of the ways. There is the choice one must make between the broad way and the narrow way. (The strategy of Satan is to attempt to so camouflage the broad way that he will deceive souls into thinking they are actually on the narrow road.) One must choose between the world and the church. When one is once inside the pale of professing Christianity there is again the choice between modernism and fundamentalism. Within the ranks of fundamentalism there lie the two paths of Calvinism (sinning religion) and Wesleyanism (the way of holiness). Strange though it be, there is still a choice to be made within the Holiness Movement. Even there, the soul is confronted by two ways, two definite groups, two emphases, two schools of thought. The lines are being sharply and clearly drawn. Choose we must. Neutrality is impossible.

These two groups, or ways are sometimes termed, on the one hand the old-fashioned, radical group, and on the other hand the popular, liberal group. There are those who would have us believe that actually the only difference between these two elements is some disagreement over so-called minor non-essentials, such as dress and outward conformity. But careful thought and observation lead us to an entirely opposite conclusion. The differences are basic and vital. There are actually two different groups, and not merely a few divergences of taste and outward appearance. There are certain irreconcilable fundamental differences between which there can be no compromise.

To try to alter one transforms it into the other, and to veer from one way is to walk in the other. The differences are identifying as to which group one really belongs and which way one is taking. We are, in spirit, aligned with one or the other regardless of profession or actual contact and fellowship.

What is said is not meant as an individual or blanket indictment of those who may differ from my viewpoint, but it is the honest result of my experience, observation, and reflection. May I hasten to add that there are good people and some "not-so-good" in both groups. There are also wrong attitudes and wrong spirit manifested on both sides.

Neither way is to be judged by the faults of some of its adherents any more than Christianity is to be judged by the sins of some professing it. To make a correct estimate of each way, and thereby arrive at a choice, one must see the vital issues from which the differences arise, observe the basic trends of each way, and conclude the probable end to be reached by each. Let me set forth briefly some of the areas of difference without stating which group is on which side, and let you be the judge as to the category into which each falls.

1. The first area of difference we note is that of preaching. On the one hand there is a shying from specifics in preaching against sin and worldliness and a substitution of pale generalities which leave sin and carnality covered and undisturbed. There is little sympathy for or toleration of preaching which might expose anyone in official position in the churches. Naturally the other group emphasizes such preaching.

2. Christian experience. Here one group places emphasis upon genuine repentance that involves confession of sin and restitution and real "praying through" to a definite witness of the Spirit. On the other side there is a real tendency to adopt the Calvinistic approach of "accepting Christ," and a shallow "take-it-by-faith" reasoning seekers into a profession. There is apparently no discernment when people need to confess and break with sin. (Oh, the tragedy of souls sliding through such shallow dealings into hell because of a lack of spiritual insight and power to hold them to the line until they get something real!) A sort of "whoop-it-up" "sky-riding" affair is just as shallow as the dry "take-it-by-faith." Both fail to deal with the basic need of the human soul and are merely "daubing with

untempered mortar.” The same line is followed in dealing with seekers for holiness. There are not many marks of a deep death to self and sin, but much talk of a shallow consecration that does not break with the world, crucify carnality, nor bring a definite witness.

3. Church promotion and services. Here the difference lies along the line of emphasis upon exaltation of personality, program, and promotion instead of a desire to depend upon the Holy Ghost to the playing down of human ability, titles, talents, and training. There is also a trend toward decrying emotional demonstration, and this leads to increased formalism in church services. The lack of appreciation for deep prayer and fasting with only lip service being paid to these vital essentials of church advancement is another characteristic. The place of social and recreational activities is a sharp issue.

4. Christian ethics. One group stands firm against such practices as attendance upon movies and public sports events, and public or mixed swimming. Television is also recognized as a form of evil to be kept from the homes. There is a trend (to put it mild) in the other group to more and more accept all these as proper conduct for Christians, even professors of the experience of holiness. Having noted some of these basic differences which are clearly discernible in the churches, revivals, camps, and conventions of the two groups, and thereby recognizing the two “ways” within the Holiness Movement, let us now ask ourselves the question as to the direction each is tending to go. After all, the direction in which anything is going, and to what and where it may eventually lead, is of prime importance.

Which of these “ways,” groups, or teachings would tend to lead the churches onto the rocks of worldliness that have wrecked so many churches and movements? Is there no danger from the world, against which Jesus and the writers of the Bible spoke so definitely? Do you see any trend toward the world in either of these ways? If so, in which is the greater danger? It seems to me it is much safer to go along with that which is headed in the right direction, even though it may be a bit rugged and imperfect, than to follow that which appears smoother but could lead astray in the end.

In which group would the seeds of modernism be most likely to find a favorable reception? Which would be most likely to accept modernistic speakers into their schools, conventions, etc.? Which would come nearer accepting the Revised Standard Version of the Bible with its quite evident questionable translations?

Which group would come nearer to accepting a “watered-down” doctrine of holiness? Into which group could Calvinistic teachers and preachers find easier access? If the churches should ever repudiate, though only by silence, the doctrine of holiness, which group would most easily tend in that direction? Which way seems to incline more toward deep revival characterized by confession, Holy Ghost demonstration, and deep experiences of regeneration and of holiness?

Where will it all end? May I ask, Did you ever know of a church going modernistic by being too strict and narrow? On the other hand, did you ever hear of one backsliding and apostatizing by first letting down on standards of conduct and then on doctrine? Furthermore, did you ever know of anyone dying victoriously, triumphantly, and gloriously, saying, “I’m glad I never sought and professed holiness. I’m happy I fought holiness?” Or did you ever know of one such to say, “I’m glad I was not too much separated from the world. I’m glad I took the popular way?” No, friend, when the cold sweat lies on our brow, when earth is growing dim and eternity is looming near, no man is too narrow then, no man is too separate then. God help us to choose the way, though narrow and straight, that involves no risk of arriving at the wrong destination.

I’ll take the narrow way,
I’ll take the narrow way
With the resolute few who dare to go through,
I’ll take the narrow way.