

**THE HUMAN
NATURE OF
THE SAINTS**

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The human nature of the saints by George Hodges

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GEORGE HODGES

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By Dr. George Hodges



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BY

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THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.—*Matt.* 23 : 29.

OUR Lord is making no objection either to architecture or to enthusiasm. His words are not to be taken as a criticism of national monuments or even of cemeteries. They do not interfere with Memorial Day or with the Fourth of July or with the festivals of the saints.

What our Lord does object to is the hypocrisy which makes so much of the prophets after they are dead, while it abuses the prophets who are yet alive. Carved stones for Elijah and Elisha, cobble stones for John and Peter; that is what He means. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

And ye yourselves are filling up the measure of your fathers."

The name of this old sin, in the milder form which it assumes to-day, is detraction. It is now aimed not against the life of the prophet, but against his reputation. The great man comes, and divides society into parties. To those who are not of his party, he can do nothing good. They make it their business to obstruct and revile him. Every word and deed is interpreted in the interests of partisan prejudice. Even his intentions are accounted base.

"I am often amazed," said Mr. Gladstone, "at the construction put upon my acts and words; but experience has shown me that they are commonly put under the microscope, and then found to contain all manner of horrors, like the animalcules in Thames water." Somebody said to that great statesman at the end of his life, "You have so lived and wrought that you have kept the soul alive in England." His noblest contemporary, after he was dead, called him "a great Christian." His biographer closes the story of his life with the words, "He upheld a golden lamp." But you know very well how he was persistently maligned. You know that there were excellent people who could not say anything too bad about him.