

The King's Highway.

And an Highway shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness.

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.—Isaiah 35:8

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THE SIFTING OF THE PEOPLE.

By Rev. B. Carradine.

We read in the Bible that when the Midianites came up against Israel, the latter had an army of thirty-two thousand to oppose to one of hundreds of thousands. The case from a numerical point of view seemed hopeless, and yet the Lord astounded the commander of the Israelites by informing him that he had too many with him for God to grant victory. The Divine Being also saw elements of weakness and defeat among the followers of Gideon which that leader did not and could not know.

So a sifting work was begun in the announcement authorized by the Lord, that all who were fearful of heart and afraid could return home. Whereupon twenty-two thousand church letters were called for and granted.

This was an amazing defection, and an awful revelation of the prevalence of timidity and panic in the hearts of the people of God. Two out of every three in Gideon's first army were cowards. We doubt not that a similar test applied to the church today would result in a proportionate emptying of the pulpits and pews in the land.

However, we do not believe that this would be a weakening but rather a strengthening of the Cause of Christ. We firmly believe that if two-thirds of the people in the Church were out, it would be better for the Church and for the world as well.

It is said that a preacher once reported at Conference that his charge had been blessed with a gracious and powerful revival. The Bishop asked him how many accessions he had received as the result; and his reply was that he had lost three hundred, and that it was the greatest and best meeting that had ever been held in his charge.

The first sifting of Gideon's army by fear was followed by a second that went still deeper in the character life. Under this test, nine thousand seven hundred more fell out of the ranks and left the leader of God's people with only three hundred men.

This double sifting is seen among the first disciples of Christ. The first falling away was beheld when he began to go down deep in spiritual things, and said they would have to eat his body and drink his blood; in other words, become partakers of the Divine Nature and Life. At these sayings such a number of his followers left him that he asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?"

The second sifting was after the Resurrection. The Saviour met in a mountain in Galilee "five hundred of the brethren." The Baptism with the Holy Ghost had not yet taken place. It was to occur in Jerusalem. His command was that they should wait for it there. And yet, when that wonderful occurrence transpired, only one hundred and twenty of the invited five hundred were present. Three hundred and eighty did not, or would not, find it convenient to leave their homes and employments and tarry for the Promise of the Father.

It is simply heartbreaking to a faithful pastor to see this sifting process going on in his congregation for a single year. Some are offended at a spiritual sermon. Some grow angry at frequent collections. Others find objections to the length or demonstrativeness of the regular service. Still others fall away during the protracted meeting; and so the change and desertion go steadily on.

The same sifting is seen taking place in the Holiness Movement. Some follow men rather than Christ. Some switch off on non-essential doctrines. Some blackside under persecution. Some are cowed, and others are blarneyed into silence and inaction. Still others take up with erroneous teaching, get sidetracked, and then off the track altogether, down the hill and in the woods like a locomotive on its back with the wheels in the air and still going, but getting nowhere.

It is an experience never to be forgotten, to revisit the scene of a great revival a year or so afterwards. It would take fifty policeman and a board of detectives to find the original company and get them together again. And even if the physical reassembling were possible, other things far more important have vanished away in the line of faith, love, brotherly kindness, attendance on the house of God and godliness never to return. No amount of preaching, praying and singing seems to be able to restore the glow and glory, or reproduce former scenes of grace, together with the tremendous conviction as well as power, which rested upon congregation and community. Some have had their feelings hurt; some are mad; some have modified their views; some have gone into "deeper truths," as they call them, and thereby have discounted the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, which the Bible uplifts as the crowning and finishing work of grace. Some have grossly sinned, and so in different ways the blessed beautiful, glorious work of other days has been smitten, scattered and, in some places, to many human eyes, appears to have been utterly destroyed.

The writer has in recollection a town where God granted him one of the greatest revivals of his life. In ten days five preachers and over one hundred members of the Methodist Church were sanctified and a number converted. The community was profoundly moved. The Presiding Elder and Official Board fought in vain. The Spirit of God gave victory over every kind of opposition, and the church was a daily scene of power and praise, liberty and salvation.

A few months after that another meeting was held. An Evangelist came who taught and encouraged Come-outism. The sermons were filled with scathing abuse of the Church. It seemed to be the signal for the incoming of every discordant and divisive spirit. Two of the preachers soon changed their views, one returning to his pipe, and the other committing a crime. Errors crept in. Bickerings sprang up. Fanaticism showed its face. Open sin reinscribed its name on the Register, and called for rooms and the Devil sent in his card.

The result is that today there is scarcely a spiritually deader place to be found than the community of which we have just written. Nor in the description have we used a single extravagant term.

These fallings away are no disproof of the doctrine and experience of holiness, but is a proof of the weakness of human nature and the power of the Devil in this his world over even good people.

We can all imagine how Christ's heart was torn when He witnessed the wholesale desertions of Himself. On one occasion He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" And so great was the defection among

His followers that He asked His apostles if they were going also.

Peter, answering for them, said they would not; and yet it was not long after that that the Saviour heard the sound of these same disciples' feet in a rapid flight down the road, and leaving Him in the hands of His enemies.

No! the thinning out and falling away in any case is no reflection on Divine Grace, whether of doctrine of experience, but is a revelation of the power of the Sifting Process when applied to poor humanity.

The people of Israel might well have been discouraged at the sight of the departure of thirty-one thousand seven hundred soldiers from the field if they had not had at the same time to gladden and steady them the vision of the faithful "Three Hundred" who would not leave, but stood true to God and their leader.

And so we might well faint and despair at the coldness, deadness, indifference, backsliding, side-tracking and actual derailment that we behold in so many directions if we did not observe just as unmistakably the faithfulness of Christian individuals, and those true and tried ones who remain firm and devoted after every revival, no matter who or how many of the congregation or community may grow cold and go back to the world. They correspond to the famous "Three Hundred" of Gideon.

The writer in common with other preachers and evangelists have seen much of his work scattered and destroyed; but with them he can also say, that he never revisited a place where God had granted him a revival, but he would find a little company of faithful ones who had weathered the storm, outlived the persecution, survived the general falling away, and kept their hearts like a watered garden in the prevailing dryness, emptiness and deadness.

These little bands of the true and tried become text, sermon, as well as inspiration, to all who are weak, doubting, faltering and failing. They demonstrate by their lives that what they have stood and done, others could endure and perform. If one can live through the outlets of temptation, the loneliness of providential allotments, the tongue and pen of ridicule, misrepresentation and slander, then all can do so. The argument then is: let all arise, take and keep the land.

Thank God for Israel's "Seven Thousand" who would not bow the knee to Baal! for Gideon's "Three Hundred" who would not fly! and for the "One hundred and twenty" who left home, farm and fishing net to wait on God for the Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

And thank God for the faithful ones of today, whether they reach the number of hundreds in some Tabernacle of Full Salvation or are a despised Corporal's Guard found working for souls in a little dingy Mission Room or Hall, or whether the "Three Hundred" are seen sifted down to a solitary individual living a lonely religious life in a cold fashionable church or in the midst of an unsympathetic worldly family circle.

God be thanked for the Three Hundred! and above all, for that Spirit which calls them forth, to an open profession as well as devotion to a life of holiness, and cause them to remain sweet and true and firm and steady in the face of all the opposing thousands and millions of this unbelieving and unfriendly world.—Christian Witness.

WHY BE HOLY?

Is it worth while? Is it necessary? Cannot I get to heaven without holiness? These are some of the questions asked when the subject of holiness is presented to some people. Still others ask, "If I am converted will not that do? Cannot I get to heaven without being wholly sanctified?"

Our Saviour said, "The children of this world in their generation are wiser than the children of light." Worldly people are determined to have all that is due them in worldly goods; but professing Christians often seem to be using all their powers of calculation to determine how little grace is necessary to get them to heaven.

In answering the question, "Why be holy?" we would say the reasons and motives for being holy are as high as heaven and as deep as hell. They are as deep as hell because it is holiness or hell with all of us. They are as high as heaven because holiness secures for us all that heaven means.

One of the greatest incentives to holiness in the Bible is found in the commandment, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." God created man for companionship with himself; to derive his happiness by communion with God. In order to enjoy this happiness and fellowship we must be like God in our nature, tastes and desires. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness?" We must be holy to have fellowship with God. Jesus says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." To know God is to have fellowship and communion with Him. Therefore holiness is necessary to give us eternal life.

We should be holy because God commands it. Over and over in the Old Testament the command is given to be holy; and repeated many times in the New Testament. One would think that the simple command of God to be holy would be sufficient reason for any Christian. When we consider His goodness, wisdom, kindness and love, it ought to forever settle the question, and inspire an intense and longing for perfect holiness.

We ought to be holy because such abundant provision, at so great a cost, has been made to provide holiness for us. The Apostle Paul says, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that it should be holy and without blemish."

We should be holy for the sake of others. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world," says our Lord. Holiness of heart and life is absolutely necessary to fulfill these functions of life. If we are not holy, we are like salt that has lost its savor; we are "good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Therefore holiness is necessary to make us useful. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts 1:8.

We should be holy for our own happiness both in this world and the world

to come. All holy people are truly happy. They "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. 11. Thess. 5:16. They have "joy unspeakable and full of glory." They have joy, not only when the sun shines but when the clouds gather and the storms of trial and affliction come upon them. In fact this is the time for which Holy Ghost power is given. The sinner can get along fairly well when all goes well, when the sun shines, when he has friends and money; but it takes salvation to give perfect peace when the storms of life break upon us, which they are sure to do sooner or later. Perfect love—holiness of heart—is the only sure remedy for all the ills of life. It will not deliver you from them, but it will give you complete victory in the midst of them, and "cause you to triumph in every place." If one is filled with perfect love, though he is a "sheep for the slaughter," yet he will always be "more than a conqueror through Him that loved us."

Is that worth while? Will it pay to be holy in order to live such a victorious life as this?—Guide to Holiness.

EARLY CHURCH-GOING.

Many parents neglect the bringing of their little children up to the house of worship. Solomon says "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6. Dr. Young says the word "train" here means, "dedicate," "give instruction." The margin in the Oxford Bible has "Catechise."

These days many people think little children should stay at home till they could understand. The Disciples rebuked the parents for bringing their children to Jesus. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not." "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them." Jesus spoke so simple that all could understand Him. Jewish parents brought their children to the house of the Lord when they were forty days old.

A certain writer in a religious magazine advocates that father and mother should alternately stay home with the children. Train up a child outside of the House of God and he is hard to transplant in later years and his growth and permanent establishment becomes the less certain the older he gets.

Parents bring your little ones along to church. Train them so well at home that they will obey you and behave in church. If you can't make them behave when small it is very likely that later on neither you nor your pastor can make them behave.

As long as they cannot behave when they sit with someone else or alone, have them sit with yourselves so you know what they are doing. Raise them up in the church and train them to obey and they will likely be members of the church and pillars in the House of God when you body is lowered into the grave, and their children will follow them.—Gospel Banner.

FREE TRACTS.

If you want some gospel tracts for distribution send your name and address on a card to Evangelist Jones, Oxford, N. S., and he will send you some free of charge.

"The smaller we are the more room God has for us."