

## DANGER FROM REASON.

By Rev. J. H. Smith.

It is not only possible for one to be led astray by enthusiasm; but likewise by enterprise—even holy enterprise. There is no stage in the divine service where we may safely lean to our own understanding any more than to follow our own feelings. Heated imagination is no more truly a dangerous substitute for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, than icy reason. While we are constantly cautioning others against depending upon their feelings, God likewise is warning us against leaning to our own understanding. After Uzzah was killed for putting his hand to stay the ark of the Lord, King David discovered and lamented that he himself had not first taken counsel of the Lord before he started the ark on that trip. When Moses first got light that God meant to deliver Israel out of Egypt by his hand, he took the matter in his own hand and went out and slew an Egyptian on the spot. If we take up God's work in our own hands, to put it through in our own way, we are in danger of killing those God means to save, and of committing sacrilege as well. As man's reason, apart from vital faith and the revelation of the Holy Spirit, is incapable of receiving Spiritual things; so, too, man's wisdom, apart from the Spirit's guidance, is incapable of applying them.

It is possible that many of our church enterprises, while prompted by laudable motives, and aiming at God's glory, are failing of the accomplishment of that glory, because planned and projected by human understanding apart from the direct personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is most probably true of more modern developments of Missionary propaganda. Few church counsels meet the condition of Holy Ghost guidance, as set forth in the precedent upon this matter at Antioch (recorded in Acts XIII.) The conventional prayer for the Spirit's guidance does not meet the case. Nothing is surer nor more clearly shown than that God has an order of His own in the world's evangelization. And nothing is more faithfully illustrated than this, that the zeal and enterprise of ever so faithful and wise a master-builder as the Apostle Paul, may obtrude his own enterprise ahead or away from the Spirit's plan and need to be halted, countermarched and re-directed. (See Acts XVI:7, etc.)

Likewise, too, it is possible that in the Holiness Movement some may have followed their own godly but fallible judgments rather than the mind of the Spirit, in their zeal to spread or to conserve this work of Holiness throughout these lands. And we fear it is almost certain that some who have been truly sanctified and called to evangelize on these lines have fallen into a policy of conferring with flesh and blood, and carrying the prudence of the worldly wise into the realm of Spiritual things, rather than wholly following the Lord.

Safety here resolves itself (1) into an individual matter. A holy man must recognize that even the godly judgment of the church (certainly of our own day) does not voice the final word of God for him and his work. And each man must "pray-through" to get and to heroically

follow the mind and will of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Into a matter of prayer above counsel and conference. Note that these latter matters are either condemned or despised by the Holy Spirit. But where as a rule, prayer is made the incident, and conference and discussion the main dependence in many of our assemblies concerning God's work, this order must be reversed. And it is after much fasting and concerted praying that the mind of God is most likely to be clearly revealed concerning measures, and methods and men, in the spread of Holiness and the advancement of His Kingdom.—Heart and Life.

## SOMETIMES OVERDONE.

The matter of propositions is sometimes overdone in revivals. Their number and character sometimes offend the taste and judgment of many of our best people. One of the best men we know, a gentleman of rare culture and unostentatious piety and great usefulness in the church, told us of some very indiscreet or extravagant propositions made to church members recently by a revivalist in his town to which he could not respond by rising. This was repeated several times, and, impelled by conscientious motives, this brother had to keep his seat. This rendered him uncomfortably conspicuous and the subject of remark and perhaps of misconstruction. He was even spoken to by parties who thought he should have stood up for the sake of his influence, even though his judgment and taste and scruples did not approve.

It is very easy to overdo this thing of making propositions in a revival. They should be rare and simple and very plain, and eminently proper. Some hearers are more discriminating than others, and often decline to respond when their declination does not mean what he unthinkingly multitude may and probably will attach to it. Be very cautious in this matter and avoid a very easy but an exceedingly unfortunate mistake which is too often made.—Herald of Holiness.

## WHY WE LOST OUR POWER.

What Mr. Sunday says about the church and worldliness is neither better nor worse because Mr. Sunday said it, but the truth is the truth no matter who says it. In one form or another the sentiment has been expressed many times before, but pass it on because we believe this utterance to be a very vital truth. "We have lost our power," says Mr. Sunday, "because we have failed to insist on the separation of the church from the world. You have lost. The church is a separate body of men and women; we are to be in the world, but not of the world; neither in your methods or impressions. The church is all right in the world, all wrong when the world is in her, and the trouble with the church today is that she has sprung a leak. The flood-tides of the world have swept in until even her pews are ingulfed; yes, even the choir loft is almost submerged. No more brilliant man ever stood on two feet than the Apostle Paul, and yet he was consecrated soul and body to the cause of God. The world has got to see a cleancut line of demarcation between the church and the world."

## CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.

"I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.

"How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently, they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

"Is there no way to prevent this—this continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal. We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich! What way, then (I ask again) can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who 'gain all they can,' and 'save all they can,' will likewise 'give all they can,' then, the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven."—John Wesley.

Dr. Snead, in "The Coming and Kingdom of Christ," tells a touching story which illustrates a great truth. A young woman married a young officer of the United States Army. Shortly afterward he was called to a distant post, and she was not permitted to go with him. To comfort her at parting, he said to her, "You know, we can never tell when our orders are to be changed. I may be away but a day; and I certainly shall be away but a short time." Then he left, and every day she looked for him to come back. He would write to her, telling her how much he loved her, as every husband will do, and would send her beautiful presents. One day she was sitting reading a letter from him, and at her feet was a box of lovely things he had sent her. As she sat there reading the letter, she heard some one at the door. Of course everything he sent her was beautiful in her eyes, and every word he addressed to her conveyed a message of love; but when she looked up and saw framed in the doorway the figure of her husband, she just threw down the letter, stumbled over the box and scattered the presents, and threw her arms around him. Beloved, we love God's Word. We can never love it too much. These messages are just full of joy and hope; but the most blessed thing is the Lord Himself.

God is infinitely more interested on man's behalf than man can be on behalf of his own interests.

"He who would reach the hearts of the people in soul-winning must first reach the heart of God in holy union and communion."