

## KEEP TO THE MAIN TRACK.

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A great deal of confusion and damage has been brought upon the cause of holiness and good old fashioned religion by the failure of so many people and so many preachers and so many leaders (so called) to keep on the main track. There has always been this tendency to "fly off." The great solar system operates by certain fixed laws of attraction by which the planets and stars are kept in their course but when it happens that a star gets out of its orbit and "flies off" it soon burns itself out to a cinder. I have known religious people, and they were good people, too, at the beginning; I have no doubt whatever that they knew God as well, perhaps better than I did, but after awhile they "flew off," they sidetracked, and finally burned themselves out and they reached a place with power gone, influence gone, liberty gone, nerves gone, steadiness gone. Oh it was sad!

I know no better counsel to give inquiring folks in these days of so many voices, and so many movements, and so many sidetracks than to urge them to walk in the old paths (Jer. 6:16), and keep to the main track.

1. In the Holiness Movement we need to keep on the main track of the old-time power as exhibited in the early days of the movement. In saying this I am not saying that we do not have great visitations of divine power in our day, but I have met many who ask the question, "Why do we not have the great manifestations that they had in the earlier days?"

I like to read of those wonderful days of old. Here is a description of one of the camp meetings in Inskip's day at Round Lake.

"The Sabbath of the second meeting at Round Lake was memorable. The sermon of Rev. J. S. Inskip in the morning, on 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' and of Rev. Alfred Cookman in the afternoon, on 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,'—had made deep impressions. And now the night-shadows were stretched forth. It was a quiet evening. A great congregation waited once more to hear the gospel. A large company of ministers was on the stand. Never did mortal voices join in spiritual hymns more melodiously than in the opening worship of the hour. The first prayer was wafted to Mercy's ear, and brought answering tokens. The preacher of the occasion was Rev. C. Munger, of Maine. His text was Eph. 1:4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' His subject was evidently well prepared. The leading thought of the discourse was, holiness the central idea of both dispensations. The illustrations were forcible. The Scripture quotations were given with accuracy, and each passage introduced was instinct with life.

"The preacher was not declamatory, but deliberate, self-possessed, and yet unctuous. He was like a mailed warrior, armed from head to foot with truth, invulnerable to every opposing shaft. As he

proceeded, the interest deepened. The glory of two dispensations was flaming before us. Christian privilege towered up magnificently. Humanity, divinely invested, clad in heaven's own light, the light of true holiness, was the central idea. At first admiration was excited; then a deep longing for the prize struggled in thousands of bosoms; then there was a half-suppressed and yet audible breathing after the life divine.

"At length the pent-up feelings of the auditory could no longer be restrained. There must be an outlet. Sobs and cries and shouts were commingled. The fully-saved exulted in the greatness of complete redemption. Those not fully saved cried aloud for the sprinkling of the blood.

"As the preacher sat down, Rev. J. S. Inskip came forward, and essayed to still the multitude. But it was like the heaving of the ocean. The big surges were rolling all around. Many plunged into the cleansing stream. The night air was richly freighted with the incense of praise. The gospel, that night, was indeed in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. The triumph was complete."

2. The Church needs to get back to and keep to the main track of the "old gospel" of a free and a full salvation. Much that is going on in the churches today can hardly be called gospel or religious. Well has one said:

"The Church is not filled with prayerful expectancy. We do not expect God to do great things. Wrapped in fateful apathy and security, the majority of Christians know nothing of that travail for souls, that passion, that intercession, those tears, which are the essential conditions of soul-winning. Let us ask the Vinedresser to prune His 'choice vine,' and make the root send forth tides of life!"

Bishop R. S. Foster said:

"To say that the Church as now living, and from the time of the beginning has been living, beneath her privilege, below her mission, would certainly be but a mild and moderate though humiliating utterance of the conviction of Christendom. She has not entered upon her full heritage. She has consciously and knowingly left much land to be possessed. What is true of the aggregate of believers is mournfully true of almost each soul in the communion of Christ's body.

"Individual Christians have fallen below the standard. But few exceptions comparatively, could, in truth or charity, be made. Only one in a multitude, with mightier impulse and greater faith than his fellows, has nobly dared to brook the difficulties, and go up to the possession of the entire promise. These stand as so many examples of the power of faith amid surrounding sterility and desolation, and at the same time are inspiring witnesses to the Church of her privilege, and reproving admonitors of her inexcusable shortcoming."

The Church needs another great awakening to the fact that her mission is to spread Scriptural holiness and to save souls. The importance of holiness has been beautifully set forth in those words of Bishop Foster.

"Holiness—It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, sup-plicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from the alpha to the omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed, holiness required, a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment—is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme."

3. The ministry needs to get back to the "old paths" of pulpit power and effective gospel ministry. Dr. Daniel Steele has well said:

"If a hesitating and powerless ministry, weakened by doubts, palsied by fear, would suddenly become bold, mighty, aggressive, and conquering, let them pray to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. This is like steam to the motionless engine. If a complaining minister, fretting and chafing on hard appointments, would be lifted into a state of perfect acquiescence with the Divine will, where none of his powers will be wasted by friction, but all subsidized for Christ, let him seek the Spirit's anointing with the oil of gladness. For the Holy Spirit in the soul is both impulse and lubrication; both steam and oil to the locomotive."

Dr. S. A. Keen bears a similar message when he said:

"Jesus said: 'Tarry till ye be endued with power from on high.' Yet how many ministers, teachers, missionaries, evangelists and workers have gone to their mission without this power to achieve it! The great blunder of the Church today is that so many are attempting to do God's work, and to save souls, without the power of the Holy Ghost. Then we wonder why, for so much giving and doing and going, there is so little fruit and so little salvation.

"If the column of the Church would halt a few moments, get on its knees, look up, and receive the Holy Ghost, without stopping long enough to go into camp, it would push on the campaign so successfully that it would be the surprise of the century."

4. Methodism needs today more than silver and gold, more than brilliant orators in pulpits, more than great edifices and great programs a return to the "old paths" of Bible doctrine revival power and holy living.

The Bishops in 1840, said in their Episcopal address:

"The doctrine of entire sanctification constitutes a leading feature of original Methodism. But let us not suppose it enough to have it in our standards; let us labor to have the experience and the power of it in our hearts. Be assured, brethren, that if our influence and usefulness, as a religious community, depends on one thing more than any other, it is upon our carrying out the great doctrine of sanctification in our life and conversation. When we fail to do this, then shall we lose our pre-eminence, and the halo of glory which surrounded the heads and lit up the path of our sainted fathers,

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