

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8.

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THE OLD-TIME RELIGION.

And it's good enough for me! But the old-time religion is not one of twenty-five or fifty years past. It is not a religion of tears, of long faces, of noise and long prayers. These are not the criteria of "the old-time religion." What, then, are they, and what is it that was good enough for our fathers?

It is not good enough unless it is 1900 years old and goes back to the church when she was at her best, "the church we forget." In the experience of the early church described in Acts 4:31 we find the true elements of the genuine, old-time religion. Here we believe can be found a pattern and a solution for the modern church with her complex problems.

4. The Practise of Prayer. "When they had prayed the place was shaken where they were gathered together." The practise of prayer and saying prayers, or even having prayer meeting, are two different things. Many churches, like individuals, say prayers, but never really pray. In the real sense many churches we fear do not believe in prayer, except as a reflex exercise. Many prayer meetings get nowhere. A prayer meeting that keeps a record of answered prayers is a rare thing today. But not so in the days of Paul. The book of the Acts is a record of answered prayers. The place was shaken, the jail wall trembled, the silversmiths lost their trade, soothsayers lost the hope of their gain, yea, the apostles "turned the world upside down."

How much is the great, well organized, heavily financed, up to date church of today shaking things? Have we failed to distinguish between strength and power, resting secure in the former? There is a vast gulf between them. A new locomotive, a modern giant of the rails, standing cold on the side track, just out of the shops, has abundant strength and perfect organization—a perfect machine. But until fires are kindled under her boiler there is no power. Many a church, splendidly equipped, has all the strength that human ingenuity can plan, but there is no power. Now prayer is laying hold of God's omnipotence. Prayer kindles the fires. Prayer brings power, the power of God. Where strength fails, the practise of two or three gathering together can shake things. This was the secret of the old time religion.

2. Spirit Filled Lives. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This is the second evidence and fruit of the old-time religion. It is the most difficult to speak of because so little is known or experienced these days in the church. The Holy Spirit is an "it" to most Christians that has little place in the bustling activities of a worldly church. The filling of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience. The Christian is not a dynamo but a storage battery for God's power and needs frequent recharging and testing. Again, the filling of the Spirit is not a gift for personal emotional enjoyment expressing itself in a noisy, irrational and uncontrolled license which some wrongly term spiritual liberty. On the contrary, it is an equipment for practical spiritual service. The Spirit-filled Christian is a worker—a soul-winner. Men take knowledge of such that he has been with Jesus.

This is not merely an experience for preachers. In "the church we forget" we find a true priesthood of believers. "And they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." "They" here does not include the apostles. Two of the greatest preachers were unordained laymen. Christ expects every Christian to prove a disciple. "They were all filled." Beecher when asked how he accomplished so much said, "I preach on Sunday and 400 of my members preach every day in the week." Would that every preacher could say that! That's the old time religion, too.

3. Preaching the Word Boldly. "And they spake the Word of God with boldness." This last element is as essential to the old-time religion as the other two and dare not be lacking. Perhaps more than anything today the ministry needs the injunction to "preach the word," and that means the whole word and everything in it. Furthermore, it means to preach it boldly. In our zeal for tact and diplomacy we have too often compromised. It is not so easy to say where tact ends and compromise begins! The preacher who must apologize for preaching the word of the living God will as surely lose his power as the Christian who is ashamed of his Lord. The church is starving for the whole Bible. We are in a "famine for the hearing of the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). We must please God rather than

men, and do it with holy boldness. Study the sermons of the Acts and compare with the present day sermons. And the world has not changed a bit, not a bit. The needs and the problems are exactly the same as is the human heart. The world is named forty-seven times in the twenty-eight chapters of Acts, and the Old Testament is quoted over one hundred times.

Put these three essentials together and we have the old-time religion. Leave any one out and we have not. The modern church too often has omitted all three, and substituted for this supposedly new day a hundred and one accessories which like many automobile accessories become hindrances rather than helps. Endless books and articles are written setting forth over "five hundred ways to help your church." Sales, banquets, lectures, playlets, pageants, movies, etc., anything under the sun but the right thing. Prayer meetings are turned into programs of "Food-Faith-Fun", with a little prayer meeting sandwiched between a banquet and a social. All this has driven the church to a place where like the movie house she must have a continual change of program. Some one says, oh, we can hear them saying it, that the church can not exist in this day without these—competition is too keen. And it's true, only too true. But why? Have you ever asked why? Simply because the church is relying upon strength rather than power, and by apostasy and compromise has lost her power with God. Like David of old, she is buckling on Saul's bulky armor. Her victory and power will return when she lays aside the world's armor and steps forth boldly in the simple faith of the early faith of the early disciples, embracing and practising all the elements of the genuine old time religion.

In conclusion, we would add that it works. That is the pragmatic test. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God. Of the early church who practised prayer, were filled with the Spirit, and who spake the word of God with boldness we read—"The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved." The old-time religion will do the same for the church today, for the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever, and the world has not changed a bit, not a bit. —H. E. Eberhardt in Evangelical Messenger.