

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. 40:3.

VOL. XXXIV.

MONCTON, N. B., NOV. 15, 1924.

NO. 109

SCRIPTURAL PREACHING.

Rev. H. S. Dow.

The caption of this article has often been suggested to me by a part of the 12th verse of I. Chapter of I. Peter, which reads, "by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," and I have often wished that some good writer (of which we have so many), would write an article on that text of scripture, but as I have not seen anything yet that seems to be to the point, I have been moved to scribble a little on the subject myself. I realize, however, that after I have said what I shall say, that there will still be much left to be said. Perhaps there is no kind of work that man can do for God that is of greater importance than preaching the gospel. Seeing that the Apostle Paul has said, "That it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I. Cor. 1:21. Then if preaching the gospel is God's means of saving men, we preachers ought to always do our best in this capacity. Perhaps there is no phase of the work which God has entrusted to man that is so much in danger of being abused as preaching the gospel. I don't profess to be a great preacher, but I am a great listener. For more than a score of years I have been a careful and prayerful listener to preachers of the gospel. During that time I have listened to a great variety of preaching, done by men of all grades, from the best educated and finely cultured down to the most unlearned would-be exponents of the word of God.

As I have listened I have often wondered just how much of the preaching was being done with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? The text referred to in the epistle of Peter suggests that scriptural preaching consists of or embraces two things, first the gospel, and second the Holy Ghost. So it would seem that a God called or Scriptural preacher must know his Bible. He may or may not have had the advantages of a college education, but he must of necessity be a student of God's word. A man would not undertake to practice medicine as a doctor without first acquiring a working knowledge of anatomy and if diseases and drugs, by years of study. Neither would a man try to practice at the bar without first studying law, because they know that they would be a complete failure. For people would not employ them to doctor their families, or to plead their cases in court. Then how can a man be a success as a preacher who does not at least know his text-book (the Bible)? I know some one will say, but the disciples or the men that Jesus called to preach were poor ignorant fisherman.

Some of them no doubt were poor fisherman, and had not studied at the institutions of learning of their time, but they evidently knew the scriptures of their day, because they quoted often from the old testament in their preaching and writings and they spoke and wrote intelligently. I have known fellows who had been converted perhaps only a few weeks or months, and did not know the A B C of the Bible (to say nothing of their ignorance of the English language) to take the platform as preachers of the gospel and rant and mis-quote, misinterpret and mis-apply scripture, and to declare that they were called of God to preach his gospel; and the things that surprised me most was that people who were supposed to be intelligent people would go and listen to them again and again and would call them good preachers. Now a man may be a good man and have the Holy Spirit, who has a desire to do good and yet, not full able to preach the gospel, because he does not know the gospel, neither has he studied the art of preaching, nor has the strongest evidence that a man has been called of God to preach is that he can preach. God makes no mistakes. The admonition of the great Apostle Paul to the young preacher Timothy was, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." So, we see that men who are wholly called of God to preach ought not to depend on God through inspiration in the pulpit, to do for them what they should have done for themselves by studying before they entered the pulpit. For if a preacher depends too much on pulpit inspiration, he will soon be covering about the same ground or saying the same things every time he tries to preach, and instead of feeding the flock of God, he will starve them, because the flock needs a change of diet to keep them strong and healthy, hence the reason they often ask for a change of preachers.

Again, I have listened to preachers who seemed to think that to be a good preacher, one must be a good entertainer, so instead of preaching the word as Paul admonished Timothy, and shunning profane and vain babblings and old wives' fables, they resorted largely to story-telling during their discourses. They would tell funny stories until many of their hearers (especially the young and unsaved) would convulse with laughter, and go out still laughing and unsaved, but praising the preacher. They told touching stories, sad stories, and thrilling stories, but many of them worn thread-bare from being told so many times, instead of the fact that their gar-

ments had been changed so many times to suit the occasion.

Many folks were moved to tears, but it seemed that no one was moved toward God. Then I thought of what one brother said, "If God's truth don't save men, I am sure that men's stories won't." I do not occasionally to make his points clear, but say that a preacher cannot use an anecdote his discourse should not contain more stories than gospel.

Then I want to mention another class which I have listened to with much interest, these men preached the gospel or a part of it at least. They did not spend much time discoursing on philosophy or on the latest findings of science. They preached "Ye must be born again." Although they do not say much about the subject of holiness especially as an experience, nor do they often tell believers, "This is the will of God even your sanctification." I remember hearing one of these men pray one time, "Lord, forgive me for preaching only half a gospel," and another in his farewell address, told his congregation that he had not preached the whole gospel to them. They did not say why they had thus failed to do their whole duty in preaching the word. I have noticed also that while these dear brethren preach, they don't seem to have much of what we preachers call liberty or unction. They do not seem to get blessed under their own preaching so that they laughed or shed tears or shouted the praises of God. Neither do the people that they minister to seem to be edified or grow in grace, nor do the unsaved often become convicted of their need of God, and get saved. The churches instead of being built up and growing stronger often grow weaker under their care.

They are good men, clean men, their names are never associated with any questionable characters of either sex; you never hear of them holding the hand or stroking the nude arm of the fair sex while the old and unattractive and oftentimes needy ones they ignore.

Last, but not least, I want to speak of another class of preachers which I always listen to with delight and much profit. Some of them are men who have several letters after their names (although they never mention the fact) while others have not been privileged to acquire as much education. Yet they know their Bibles and seem to be "all taught of God" and they know enough of the English language to express their thoughts intelligently. Their outward life is above reproach and I learned that they spend much time in secret prayer and studying God's word. They

(Continued on Page 4)