

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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LIVING EPISTLES.

A Conditioning Factor of Continuous Spiritual Growth in the Church.

By Miss Monna M. Rogers

"You are writing a Gospel, a chapter each day, By deeds that you do, by words that you say. Men, read what you write—whether faithful or true.

Say! What is the Gospel according to you?"

The ideal church which is continually growing spiritually will reveal a Spirit-filled ministry and a Spirit-filled laity. When the two labor hand in hand, "co-laborers together with God," the work will move forward. Their lives will be a constant witness to the world of the truth of the Gospel which is preached and of the testimony which is given. Allow me to quote the words of C. S. Rennells in the Sunday school discussion recently. "It is impossible for a Spirit-filled Christian to live in any community without being a witness. The Spirit-filled Christian goes to church when it rains and people take notice. The Spirit-filled Sunday school teacher does not allow company to keep him or her from class and the class takes notice and believes. Spirit-filled folks put the church first above private affairs and their neighbors believe they are real Christians.

They are quite sure to be in prayer meeting and a revival results. Being a witness is more important than giving a testimony the Spirit-filled folks will do that too. Christ said, "Ye are my witnesses." Brother, sister, is our witness true?

If God brings to us the realization that our church is lacking in power, that the spiritual tide is ebbing, let us first of all begin to examine our own hearts. "Let us search and try our way." "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me." "But let each man prove his own work." "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." By these passages and many others God shows us that we need continually to be searching our hearts lest the enemy slip in and deceive us and we become like Samson of old who wist not that the Spirit had left him.

As we search our hearts what do we find? Have we the same power with God and with man we had six months or a year ago? Have we the same love for the secret place of prayer and for God's Word? Does a close searching message from the Lord cause us to shrink and wish we were somewhere else? Do we enjoy the prayer-meeting and the fellowship of the saints as we once did? Are we living in such

close communion and fellowship with the Lord that we are receiving from Him continually fresh anointings? Are our lives really setting forth the blessedness of constant communion with Him? Are we living in vital touch with Him so that the sacredness and sweetness of the Rose of Sharon pervades our every fibre, or have we been walking afar off so that an element of bitterness has crept into our Gospel? Can the world see Jesus in all His sweet perfect loveliness in you? Can they see Him in me? Or do they see a dry, lifeless stalk, meant by God's plan to be sturdy and strong, intended to provide strength and help for others, but alas, of no value even to itself? "What is the Gospel according to you?"

Co-workers in the Kingdom of Christ, are we "in the world but not of it?" Are we living so close to the Lord that people as they come in contact with us continually—not merely now and then—take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus? Are we really proving to the world that we are grafted in the true and living vine, drawing from Him every ounce of our strength? Or are we so wavering and uncertain that we cause people to wonder if the words we speak with our lips are true? So many times we hear quoted the words of Emerson: "What you are speaks so loudly I can not hear what you say." Is this true of us? Are we as shepherds of the flock true living epistles? Does our daily walk continually witness His victorious saving, sanctifying power? If we, His anointed, His called-out ones, can not walk in agreement with the Word what can we expect of our flocks who are reading of Him from our lives?

Just as people often read the Word of God and fail to get from it the real meaning hidden therein, so with our lives. They will read our acts and interpret them according to their own opinion rather than by asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate the page of Holy Writ. The world will no more clearly interpret our lives than they interpret the Sacred Book; but the closer we live to the Lord, the more we are hidden away with Him, the more we feed on the Word the better we will be able to live the Word and the more likely will they be to correctly interpret our lives. We can expect to be misunderstood so long as Satan is unbound and with his sons and daughters walks to and fro upon the earth. But should we despair and draw back, should we say, "They have misunderstood my acts, my words? It is no use for me to try to do anything more to help the church. I'll just stay away from services. I'll hide myself away and live the life of a recluse—a hermit."

Would the church of God ever have gained any ground if all who were misunderstood had acted so? Yet it is right for all to do it as for one. The souls that have been won for Christ through the years of the past and those who will be won for Him in the years to come would suffer in torment through an endless eternity if such a procedure were followed. "But ye have not so learned Christ." Let us follow in the footsteps of Him who is our perfect example. Only as we keep in close touch with God and maintain a strong spiritual life ourselves, forgetting moment by moment those things which are behind—the criticisms, the slights, the misunderstandings, and all such—can we hope to give forth strength to others.

Just as when we read again and again some passage in the Word and never grasp the full meaning of it, so it is necessary for people to read our lives again and again to glean the full import of our acts and words. The Word changeth not, it abideth ever the same, but people change and what at one time was to them a hidden passage, at another reading may unfold before them in a marvelous way until they exclaim, "Oh, I see and understand now! I had always wondered just why the Lord put it down that way." Hence just as we live close to God, hidden away with Christ in God, drawing our strength from Him alone; by His grace, through His strength and wisdom living lives that are calm, are constant and steadfast as a peacefully shining star; as we go on turning neither to the right hand nor the left, abiding as did Paul in the place where "none of these things move me"—then but not till then—will we be able to make our gospels ring true to the Living Word. Then—but not till then—will our lives be a source of continuous spiritual growth to the church. We can not—we dare not be "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." We can not—we dare not waver in the least degree. If we do our epistles will be grace, through His strength and wisdom, living lives that are false to the Living Word. They will kill where we would make alive. They will cause unwary feet to wander and stumble in the way. The church of which we are a part will be fruitless and lifeless.

True, it is, all does not depend upon the shepherd of the flock. Sheep that are well-fed and watered will ordinarily remain contentedly where the shepherd leads them, and will wax fat and flourishing. Often though there will be found in the flock one or two who are dissatisfied, who run hither

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Mrs. Hartshorn Muller,
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