

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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How We May Be Sure We Are Right.

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It is easy enough for most of us to affirm that we are right and that we know we are right, but it is quite another thing to have absolutely positive proof that we are right. Being right is so important and being wrong so dangerous that no one can afford to take any risk. Fortunately the Lord does not leave us under any necessity for being uncertain, but has given us standards which are absolutely accurate by which to measure and judge our conduct.

It needs but to be mentioned to command instant attention and acceptance, that no standard less than the one God has set up will be sufficient either for our own safety or for universal acceptance. If each man is to act according to his own judgment, then unity, harmony, and co-operation are rendered forever impossible; but when men can be gathered about a standard erected by divine authority, every man may safely and honorably bow to it, and then peace and harmony and unity may prevail.

So persistent is Satan's purpose to lead men astray that he has succeeded in having many false standards set up. Perhaps none more frequently, persistently, and almost viciously than of our own experience. A worldly maxim which has governed thousands of persons is in substance that experience is the best of teachers. In science much is based upon experiment. It is a common saying that what a man has experienced that he knows, that it is well enough to walk and live by faith up to a certain point, but when faith is realized in experience the subject becomes a matter of actual knowledge, and consequently passes out of the realm of faith into that of experience. Properly explained and modified and restricted this statement is true enough, but applied beyond where it belongs and without limitations it is false just like other half truths. There are so many modifications of experience, so many factors entering into experience, some of them entirely unknown, that experience often becomes a false standard and utterly unsafe.

Many persons elevate what they believe to be God's blessings into a standard, and reason that since God blesses them in what they are doing it must be that they are doing right. That this is a false and unsafe standard may be readily enough judged from the fact that many a person has assumed that the delightful sensations possessed were the blessing of

the Lord, when in reality their good feelings were merely a play upon their own sensibilities by their own thoughts or by the operation of some other mind upon them. Furthermore it is not proved that God never blesses any one who is doing wrong, but on the contrary it is capable of proof that God blesses persons sometimes when they mean to do right but ignorantly are in grave error both of belief and practice. The woman who felt called upon to pray with a family in a desolate house back in the fields at midnight was blessed, and if being blessed proves one to be right she was right; yet when she reached the house she discovered that there was no one living in it.

Another person esteems himself to be right because his conscience does not condemn him. In this he makes the mistake of putting conscience over his life as the guardian of his conduct, and by forcing his conscience out of its proper place and into the place of sound judgment. When we remember that God has given us ability to see things and reach conclusions by the exercise of our judgment and thus determine whether anything is right or wrong, and when we confine ourselves to that condition we have taken a long step toward being exactly right. When we remember that conscience has not the duty to decide for us what is right or wrong, but wholly to approve when we choose the right and disapprove when we choose the wrong, we have taken another long step toward doing and being exactly right. If the judgment has decided that a certain course is right it is the office of conscience to unqualifiedly approve doing that right thing. If the judgment has decided that a certain course is wrong it is the business of conscience to disapprove that wrong. Conscience has nothing to do with making either the right or wrong decisions of judgment, and if judgment has been misinformed, or prejudiced, or does not reach a right and safe decision, there is nothing in conscience to illuminate or correct the judgment.

Life is not a theory, although a man may regulate his life according to the dictates of a theory, but otherwise theories are dead and sometimes useless. Since life is not a theory, there must enter into the standard by which life is to be directed something more than theory. A theory is something that men have invented and is subject to change and can be improved or injured and made practically worthless and destructive.

Comparing life with life comes nearer to being a sufficient standard of measurement

and is very much superior to comparing life with a theory. The value of such a comparison of life with life increases just as the life with which the comparison is made is found to be superior to our life. Some persons who are sufficiently distrustful of their own experience seem to be over trustful of the experience of other people and they reason about it much the same as others do about their own experience. They reason that since it is the other man's experience, since God blesses him in it, he must be right, and so this other man's experience is set up as a standard! Against all such tests or standards it should be distinctly recognized that in all of God's creation there are no two things exactly alike, no two persons can have exactly the same experience, no two individuals with the same temperament.

In every discussion of standards of right and wrong as related to human character and conduct it should be always distinctly and emphatically remembered that every phase of character and experience and conduct is described in the Bible, hence what is said in the Bible can alone become the standard by which we may judge ourselves or others may judge us. If this is not true we have no divine standard and the purpose for which the Bible was given is defeated.

In using the Bible as the moral standard by which to measure men it appears in a double aspect. First of all it is the Bible with the living Christ in it. Leave Jesus out of the Bible, or out of any part of it, or look upon Him in the Bible as being dead, and the Book at once ceases to be what it ought to be to us, what it must be to us if it is to be the standard by which to measure our lives. A Christless Bible even though it may contain vast stores of truth and doctrines and principles of high moral rank is a useless Bible when we would pass judgment upon our own character and conduct. A Bible with only the historic Christ in it, without the living Christ, the Christ who died and rose again from the dead, is equally worthless.

The other aspect of the Bible as a standard of moral character and conduct consists in the fact that it is the Bible of the living, personal, ever present Holy Spirit. The Bible taken without the illumination of the Holy Spirit is a sealed book which no man can properly open. The same Holy Spirit who inspired men to write this Book is needed to help them to understand it, to make its passages transparent with light and blessing.—The Wesleyan Methodist.