

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.—35-8

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THE SECOND WEAK SPOT

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Recently we read in a religious magazine an outline of a sermon made up from the material found in an issue of that particular magazine. One part of the outline attracted our attention. It was the part which purported to be an answer to the question, "Who is the carnal man?" (I. Cor. 3:1-3) It stated in answer, "He is a Christian. But—what kind? Then the outline proceeded to tell us among other things, that this Christian (the carnal man) was noted for "running after all sorts of isms," was participant in church quarrels, was carried away by the spirit of jealousy and strife and lived "after the manner of men." Having divided this outline into three parts: 1. Natural man; 2. Carnal man; 3. Spiritual man, the writer noted at the end of the outline what he was pleased to call the "weak spot," in the sermon. This "weak spot," he stated, was the fact that in preaching this sermon he had failed to tell his listeners that the privilege of the "natural man," was to receive here and now the things of the Spirit of God. This, of course, he would include the next time he preached it.

Now, we have no criticism to make of the outline, but it gave rise in our mind to a number of questions. It seemed to us that it had a second "weak spot" in it. We could not help feeling that the standard which was allowed in the so-called "carnal Christian" was far below what the Bible declares for a "born again" experience. What advantage or encouragement would it be to tell the listeners that the "natural man" could receive the things of the Spirit of God, if the person who is supposed to have done this can live in an atmosphere and experience that savors so much of the natural, though he be called by the term "carnal Christian?"

What do men mean to imply by this term? Do they mean by this a person who has a Christian experience, but retains as yet the carnal mind against which he must war? If this is what they mean, we could agree that this would be allowable in the merely regenerate soul. But if the carnal Christian they mean one who is not only possessed of the carnal mind, but who follows it and walks after it in the obedience to it, then we must of necessity revert from following any such teaching. For the Word of God emphatically declares that to be carnally minded (to obey the carnal mind) is death. (Rom. 8-6). It also infers that he who walks after the flesh, the carnal mind, is under condemnation, he is not justified, and if not justified he is out of a

safe relation with God. He can not be a Christian and be a servant of the devil at the same time. "No man can serve two masters." The test of service here is to "whom ye yield yourselves." (Rom. 6:16)

We have always believed that a Christian is one who is born again. (John 33, 7). Does the new birth consist of such a low standard of experience that all these carnal things are to be allowed in company with it? Mere churcharity and religion may allow this, but the Bible standard of the born again never will. To be born again results in a certain condition on the inside that gives certain expressions on the outside. We would call attention to some passages of scripture in the light of which, to teach that a person could follow the things before stated as allowable in the so-called carnal Christian would be indeed a "weak spot" in Bible teaching.

In I. Peter 1:23 we read, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God." The Weymouth translation gives the 22nd verse in these words: "Now that, through your obedience to the truth, you have prepared your souls by purification for sincere brotherly love, you must love one another heartily and fervently. For you have been begotten again by God's living and enduring word, not from perishable, but imperishable seed." Our King James Version says, "Being born," i. e. the state of existing in the new birth experience expressed outwardly by the action stated in verse 22. Even as new born babes they were to lay aside malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil speaking and to desire the sincere milk of the Word. (I. Peter 2:1, 2).

The Apostle John wrote his first epistle to the "born ones." In it he tells us some things that they express in life. He draws a contrast between the children of God and the children of the devil. He sums up some of the things that are evidences of the New Birth.

1. One born of God believes that Jesus is the Christ (I. John 5:1). The proof of our believing in a manner that will obtain for us salvation is that we keep His commandments, which are not grievous. "Believeth" is of the present progressive tense. It is the act of continuously committing the soul to Christ that we may live in a safe relationship to God.

2. Every one that loves is born of God. (I. John 4:7). He that does not love does not know God. (v. 8). In verse eleven is given the object of this love. "We ought to love one another." This is declared about one born of God. Where then is there any place in the

born again experience for malice, hatred, envy, wrath, underhanded backbiting, slandering people behind their backs, trying to undermine the other fellow's influence for good and holding grudges which are so often manifest among professors of religion. Is there any place for such conduct as mentioned in I. Cor. 3:3 concerning which Paul accused them as "Walking as men?" Did not he in closing up his second letter to this church enumerate the things that made him suspicious that they were no longer "in the faith?" (2 Cor. 12: 20, 21). He then threw the initiative over to them and in 2 Cor. 13: 5 commanded them to examine themselves to see if they were. What better evidence is there of Jesus Christ in us than the expression, "By their fruits ye shall know them!"

3. Whoever is born of God overcometh the world. (I. John 5:4). John defines the world as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. (I. John 2:15). It avails nothing to argue here that John was speaking to people of four different stages in Christian experience. For he gives this instruction after having mentioned first the fathers, then the young men, next the little children and finally the beloved children. Dr. Adam Clarke thinks that this instruction is given to all four classes, which of course takes in the very youngest of the "born ones." They were not to love the world but overcome it.

4. Everyone that is born of God doeth righteousness. (I. John 2:29). This person not only overcomes the pressure of the world, but there is a positive side to his life. "He doeth righteousness." "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto Sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13). Sin was not to have domination over them, for they were alive from the dead and under grace.

5. "Whosoever is born of God doth not committ sin." (I. John 3:9). The standard for "the little children" is "that ye sin not." (I. John 2:1). In case they should fall into sin they have an advocate. But this does not argue that the child is to practice sin and live in the flesh "after the manner of men." His experience as one born of God is that he cannot sin, i. e., He is able not to sin, for so the word means. God's seed remains in him to keep him if he keep yielding to God. The same spirit of life in Christ that brings the new birth breaks the law of sin and death in his members. (Rom. 8:2)

(Continued on Page 5)

Beulah Camp Meeting - - June 30-July 9

Rev. Peter Wiseman, D.D., Ottawa, Canada, Evangelist