

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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WHAT ABOUT BACKSLIDERS AND HYPOCRITES.

By The Editor

A few days ago we received a question for the question box, reading as follows. "Which is the worst for the church a backslider or a hypocrite?" The question started a train of thoughts going in my mind and gave us some inspiration for this article. First I would say that while both characters referred to here may belong to societies, which we commonly call churches, yet neither hypocrites or backsliders belong to the true church of Jesus Christ. A man becomes a child of God and member of the true invisible church of the First Born, by virtue of repentance on his part and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for Salvation from sin. And he can only sustain that relationship by obedience to God and a continued faith. "The just shall live by faith", Rom. 1:17. Hence if he deliberately disobeys God his faith is no longer operative for a disobedient soul cannot exercise either faith to save, or to keep him, after he has been saved. Hence when a soul ceases to exercise faith he falls, or backslides out of the Father's family or out of the church of Jesus Christ. I often hear the preachers of eternal security quote John 10:28. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish". But they seem to overlook the fact that our Lord laid down a condition for them, before He made that wonderful and gracious promise. Let us look at the preceding verses and see whom He made the promise to. See verse 27. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." and in verse 26 he implies they were His sheep because they believed on Him. So we see the promise of eternal security that Jesus made was to those who believed, and heard His voice and followed (obeyed) Him, or He made faith and obedience the conditions upon which men sustain a saving relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Webster, a hypocrite is one who acts the part of another, a deceiver or pretender. So you see we do not need to go to the so-called churches to find hypocrites as some would have us believe, because the world is full of such characters. We find folk in every walk of life who are pretending to be what they are not. Hear a parable. There was a certain man in a community who left his wife and went and took to him another woman and lived with her, and the respectable people of that place were greatly displeased and criticized that man severely behind his back, for doing such a disgraceful thing. But what do you think they did when they met him on the streets, and at the church with his new woman? This is what they did. They all greeted the hypocrite. They smiled sweetly at them, and said, how do you do, and shook them by the hand, as if they all heartily approved of what he had done. Oh ye hypocrites! Or, it may be that a certain man decides to get rich quick, so he resorts to dishonest dealings in business, such as defrauding his creditors by abusing his privilege in the insolvent law. Or he may be a politician and hold a position in the government of his country, and put through a shrewd deal with the

government, that would quickly turn a few thousands his way etc. But he gets the money dishonestly, and it is generally known by the people, and they are strong and loud in their condemnation of his dishonest dealings, but of course he does not hear them. For when he comes out and makes a big show on his ill-gotten gain, the women smile sweetly on him, and all of the men shake his hand, and say, how do you do, so glad to see you, and all act as if they heartily approved of his way of getting money. Oh ye hypocrites! Again let us take a look in on the social life of our day, and see what we shall see. Here is a certain dame who determines to remain young in appearance in spite of the passing of the years, so she resorts to the curling irons and rouge in trying to bring back her lost youth. And many of her associates laugh at her, and say how ridiculous! and silly she looks, when she does not hear them, which of course is all true. But when they meet her with her changed complexion and frizzled hair, they smile very sweetly at her and say, Oh, how sweet you look, and I like your make-up so much, and act and talk as if they heartily approved of her action. Oh, ye hypocrites! And a great deal of this deary, deary here, and deary there that we hear so much in social circles these days is mere sophistication.

The fact is that if people and preachers were more frank and outspoken in their attitude toward wrong and reprov'd wrong-doers, in our communities, towns, and churches, we would lift up a higher moral standard for people generally, and thus make it more uncomfortable for some people to live in sin and crime. And perhaps save many young people from following their example. The word of God has no compliments for either backsliders or hypocrites. Jesus called the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, serpents, a generation of vipers, and said how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Peter said concerning the backslider. "The dog has returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire". But the Bible does hold out hope and salvation to both characters if they will repent, turn from sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55:7.

DR. BRISTOL IN BOSTON

Rev. F. M. Bristol, D. D., the young and brilliant Methodist preacher from Chicago, was in Boston last week, delivering a series of lectures on preaching before the students of Boston University, at Jacob Sleeper Hall, each noon. The subjects were, The Preacher's Pulpit, The Preacher's Methods, The Preacher's Model, The Preacher's Power, The Preacher's World. The lecturer is full of his subject, full of earnestness, forceful and eloquent in delivery, interesting in style, abounds in a wealth of good English and happy illustrations, with frequent flashes of wit. A few of the good points made in the lecture on The Preacher's Methods are substantially as follows:—

Preaching is more than art, and art is the smallest part of it. There are individualities in sermons as in paintings. A Simpson, a Spurgeon, and every great preacher has something in his sermons they never learn,—they have put themselves into their sermons. No two great preachers are ever alike. They remind you of each other by contrast, rather than similarity. Above all, young preachers, do not imitate. Homiletical art can never take the place of brain-thought and heart-feeling. Education can bring the preacher genius out of one, but not all the schools in the world can put it into anybody.

If there should be more of that kind of work that kills preachers, there would be more of the kind that saves men. Dr. Bristol talked a little on the mechanical portions of preaching, and dwelt on the object of preaching, which he said was human holiness. Every sermon, therefore, should aim at the perfecting of the saints. Whether the subject be repentance, faith, adoption, justification, regeneration, sanctification, death, heaven, or hell, let the object be the making of men holy; not that we should not have variety, but in all this the one serious object should be before us. Seriousness is the soul of eloquence.

How one can coldly speak these sublime truths as if he were demonstrating a mathematical proposition passes comprehension. How many have too narrow an estimation of the preaching of the Word! If the prophets of old denounced the sins of other days, why should ADD DR. BRISTOL IN BOSTON

not the preachers of today thunder against the crimes of Boston, New York, and Chicago?

Preaching against oppression and dirt is paving the way for preaching against the selfish oppression of individual vices.

How should the preacher build his sermon? He should not build it. It should grow. Every true sermon has an eccentric manner of its own. Say your best things right off. Best things won't keep. There is very much stale fruit in the sermons of some preachers. It has been kept too long. That which can be kept until next Sunday had better be kept until next Sunday. Be honest with the truth of God. Do not be in haste to mend the Scriptures. Take texts as open as the roses and clear as the dew-drop and bright as the sun. Theology is a science; religion is a life. Whatever changes may take place in botany, the flowers will keep right on growing.

Preach not your speculations, but your beliefs, your certainties. Deliver your message, not twisted nor warped, but publish, not speculate; teach, not deny; preach, not theology but Christ. Theology will help you preach, but don't preach theology. Your breakfast will help you preach, but you don't preach your bill of fare. My theology is not my God, my Saviour, my Sanctifier.

Be clear. This is the one rule for preaching. Have the thoughts clear in your mind. Never be ornate at the expense of clearness. Abraham Lincoln never sought to be eloquent, but always to be clear. Correctness of pronunciation and distinctness of articulation are the two rules of elocution. Speak earnestly and in sincerity.—Christian Witness 1892.

Mrs. Fred Brown, Dec 23