

# The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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## SPECIAL NOTICE

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## EDITORIAL

### EPHRAIM IS GETTING OLD

Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea grey hairs are here and there upon him yet he knoweth not. Hosea 7:9.

Ephraim's is a good mixer; but his associations, have a bad effect on his spiritual life. They have devoured his strength. When a Christian tries to be a good mixer, even though that person thinks he or she is going to help people; the result is, that Christian is the loser.

He like Ephraim may not realize for a time that he has lost out, "He knoweth it not". We remember that after Sampson had broken his vow with God and disclosed the secret of his great strength; he said "I will go out as at other times before and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

It is exceedingly bad for a Christian to lose the smile of God when he knows about it; but much worse to be self deceived so "he knoweth it not."

The Laodicean church said, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." Jesus said "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." What an awful charge for Jesus to make against any church, and yet I wonder if he could not say the same of many so-called churches today. They may have numerical strength, and financial strength; but they have mixed themselves among the people, and taken many into membership those who are strangers to the grace of God, and these have devoured their spiritual strength.

Note also Ephraim is getting old, yet does not seem to be conscious of it. "Grey hairs are here and there upon him yet he knoweth not". I know that we often try to deceive ourselves when grey hairs appear and sometimes we say, grey hairs are a sign of early piety, and some say their head is so full of grey matter (wisdom), that it is just overflowing and coming out on their hair; but the real fact is grey hairs are symptoms of advancing age, and we should not be surprised at their appearance, or ashamed of them, and try to color them black or brown to hide them. The Word says that "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness."

But let us keep in mind that the Lord is not speaking here of Ephraim's natural appearance; but of his spiritual condition. And it is no compliment that the Lord is paying Ephraim when he tells him that his spiritual strength is waning and he is growing old. The normal, healthy Christian soul does not grow old like the body. The apostle says, though our outward man perish

the inner man is renewed day by day. And again they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing. Psalms 92:14. It is true of course that the body which the apostle calls this earthly house, the habitation of the soul, does grow old; but he says when it does we have a building of God eternal and in the heavens etc. Now let us notice briefly some of the symptoms of spiritual decline which might be answerable to the grey hairs the Lord saw on Ephraim.

Please excuse me Ephraim if I call your attention to a few grey hairs here and there upon you. There are the grey hairs of declining interest in the means of grace. I mean do you read your Bible and good religious literature with the same relish that you used to when you were younger, to feed your hungry soul? Do you still enjoy secret prayer and communion with God or do you get lonely when left alone and want to run about, and find someone to talk to? Do you not enjoy the company of yourself? Do you still find it a real delight to attend the early Sunday morning prayer and testimony service, or do you sleep until you are too late? What about the mid-week prayer meeting are you getting so old and feeble and have to work so hard during the day that you have no strength or desire left to go? Are there any grey hairs on you there Ephraim?

When you do go to church and find yourself in a meeting where the Christians are praying and testifying, are you glad for the opportunity of having part also, and is there real inspiration in your testimony and prayer, so others get blessed? Or has your prayer lost its grip, and your testimony its ring and positive assurance to second blessing holiness? Have you become indefinite and tell what the Lord can do, or what he did for you several years ago? Instead of telling how he blesses your soul today with fresh revelations of himself. Are you growing in grace, so that you find it easier to be patient with those who disagree with you? Do you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you?

Ephraim if you find your strength failing in any of these places, I am glad to tell you there is a remedy. The great prophet Isaiah says. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. Praise the Lord! We hope to see you again. Ephraim.

### CHANGING ATTITUDE TOWARDS S. S. WORK

The S. S. has been accepted as a matter of fact for so long that perhaps one has never thought of its origin. It is the general idea that the S. S. has developed from the Church itself. This is not so. In reality the S. S. is but the adopted child of the Church. Possibly one of the most unfortunate things connected with S. S. history is the fact that it originated outside of the Church and at its beginning was opposed by that body.

It is difficult to realize that a little more than a century ago in many places the S. S. was regarded as an "innovation" and as such had to fight for its existence as a form of Christian service. The following statement will indicate the bitterness of the opposition to this work. Some churches were built with the proviso in the deed that if S. S. should be organized therein, the property was to revert to the original owner.

Gradually the S. S. has grown until for more than half a century it has occupied a conspicuous place in church service and enterprise. Although

its provision for the instruction of the children of the Church has hitherto been insufficient, nevertheless in view of the conditions existing in the past, it has made a distinct contribution to the life of the child and to the work of the Church.

Throughout most of its history the S. S. to a great extent has been considered outside the rightful sphere of the pastor's work. It is true that the majority of pastors desired the success of this work, but it was a department of service that brought small returns in comparison to the other task of the ministry. The pastor's chief concern was the adult portion of his congregation and the dominating factor of his service was preaching. The conversion of children was oft-times sought but since the S. S. provided no opportunity for preaching, it occupied little of the minister's attention and time.

One outstanding reason for the low valuation of S. S. work was a lack of vision as to the great possibilities it held. A vision is necessary to any worthwhile effort. Vision is more than dreaming of success. "A vision that makes for achievement must crystalize in a goal", as one writer hath expressed it. The architect before he can build must get a vision of his task, and then put it into blue print, which is the concrete expression of the goal. Thus the pastor or leader needs a vision which has a definite objection in view.

Also the imperfect teaching methods, patterned after secular education, failed to add to the usefulness and attractiveness of this work.

But probably the greatest reason for this low estimation was due to the fact that religion occupied such a comparatively large place in the mental and social life of those days. Then, the majority of Christian homes had family altars; the truth was preached from the pulpits; the people attended Church. Consequently both adults and children had for a religious background a knowledge of Bible facts, some conception of religious truth, a reverence for the Bible as the Word of God, and a fair appreciation of the Xian standard.

Thus the great contribution of the S. S. in those earlier days was not the formation of a religious background, but rather an attempt to use such a background in the development of the Xian life. This was accomplished through the memorization of Scriptures and opportunities afforded for expression of religious thought and service to laymen, who appreciated these rare privileges.

But while the pastors generally encouraged the S. S. work the majority considered it as a work of inferior importance and independent from their field of service.

Today, however, religious leaders are awakening to the fact that conditions have changed. We are living in a changing and changed world, and the minister who only preaches sermons, no matter how great he is, will find his field of usefulness limited. Knowledge of the social and religious tendencies of the day and age will do much toward revealing the necessity and importance of S. S. work.

In former days the church had no rivals to engage the attention of the young people. The greater part of the population was rural and to such a class of people church services were attended for the social as well as the religious advantages. The Church was attended because there was no other choice and the lives of these people held so few interests that the new thought and change which the Church offered to them was welcome. Also outside of school there were few occasions for social contact with other children.

Today numerous interests are crowding in