

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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Editor and Business Manager - Rev. R. C. Cochrane
Associate Editor - Rev. H. S. Dow
Other members of Committee: Revs. L. T. Sabine,
H. C. Mullen, P. J. Trafton, H. M. Kimball

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EDITORIAL

WHEN HE IS COME

The Holy Spirit is the personal power behind genuine revivals. When a prayerful, believing, obedient church prepares herself for the unhampered ministry of the Spirit of God, He releases power sufficient to melt the stony heart, arouse the cold impenitent, transform the confirmed sinner, and drive the devil from the field in humiliation and defeat.

The devil has never proven himself sufficient to this fiery test. He may attract the crowd away from us by putting on a programme which outshines the highly advertised revival campaign and its staff of workers. He may lull people to sleep with soft words of reassurance while the preacher seeks to arouse them with thunderous judgment warnings. He may move men to resist our tearful appeals to reconciliation and thus hold in captivity those whom we seek to liberate. But when the Holy Ghost is come the church becomes the center of attraction in the community, those who attend the services are "pricked in their hearts" with mighty conviction, and decisions are won in favour of Christ and the souls for whom He died.

The human instrument may be humble and quite without outstanding natural gifts, as in the Welsh revival, or he may be cultured and learned, as in the Wesleyan revival, but the results are alike when the Holy Ghost is come. That mighty Person, whose coming was as the sound of rushing mighty wind, still sweeps down upon the souls of men, at the earnest, persistent appeal of a church in the throes of soul-travail, and His presence always creates a dominating influence that turns the tide of battle in favour of the people of God.

He will come upon us if we wait for Him. Lacking the sense of the urgent need of His presence we shall reap meager harvests from our labours, but, seeking His help with desperate faith, we shall be rewarded with an abundant harvest. The promises of God relative to His coming and soul-saving ministry have not been abrogated. We are yet in the last-day period referred to by the prophet Joel, the time in which God promised to "pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." Shall we not seek Him, "until He come?"

Church of the Living God, arise,
The fulness to receive;

Until the lost in ev'ry place,
Shall feel the need of serving grace,
And shall on Christ believe.

PASTORAL VISITATION Its Advantages and Disadvantages

By the Associate Editor

Our good editor asked me to prepare a paper, or give a talk on the foregoing subject at the Ministers' Conference at Moncton, but whereas the weatherman sent a big snowstorm and cheated me out of the privilege of attending that Conference, I am sending my little article to our paper, The King's Highway.

It is not the purpose of this writer in using the term "disadvantages" in the caption of this article, to discourage any pastor from visiting his people, for we feel that pastoral visitation is a very important part of the pastor's work, and we fear that it is a part which many of us do not practice nearly enough. So if we do find that there are some disadvantages in this phase of our service, let us not do less of this good work, but rather learn how to overcome these disadvantages and do more visiting if possible. Some pastors find it more difficult to call than others, not because they do not like the work or effort which it requires, but rather because they have a constitutional makeup which shrinks from meeting people, and trying to carry on a conversation with those whom they are not very well acquainted with, especially when those on whom he calls are women, the men being away at work.

If the pastor could always have his wife with him when calling, to help to carry on the conversation, I am sure that these bashful preachers would be greatly relieved.

There are other ministers who don't mind meeting people. They have tact, which seems to make it easy for them to adapt themselves to various environments and they are good conversationalists, which makes them interesting and desirable callers. Hence, they know not how to sympathize with some of us who are not so blessed.

I read somewhere that Sam Jones, the great evangelist and writer, said that he did not care whether the pastor called on his family, but he did desire that he preach the gospel to them when they went to church. Of course that was only Mr. Jones' idea of pastoral visitation, and may not be worth very much, for we feel sure that there are very great advantages in pastoral visitation.

One thing which might prove to be a disadvantage to the pastor in much calling, and one which he will need to overcome, is the danger of getting too well acquainted with his people. We heard of one pastor whom they said got his material for his Sunday sermons from what he saw and heard when he called in the homes of his parishioners, and the result was that the people on whom he called were so offended at what he said as he preached at them that they would not come to church. That is what we may call one of the disadvantages. It would have been better for that pastor not to have visited than to call and then be personal in his preaching at his people from the pulpit. It would have been better for all concerned for him to have talked to those people in their homes about their weaknesses, and not to have preached at them in public.

It seems that the great outstanding motive for pastoral visitation should be to help people spiritually. All that we do or say should work to

that end. We have heard of other pastors who when they call have the very bad habit of gossiping about other church members, and thus creating a spirit of division in the church. They have been known to sympathize with some who are not very spiritual and who seem to have some grievance, and to hold hard feelings against others, and so encourage them in their attitude by gossiping with them, and talking against the absent parties. Of course the people to whom they talk are greatly pleased to have their pastor sympathize with them, but the result is that a pastor like that will help to make a breach in the church which will be very hard to heal. Some church members will doubtless have many weaknesses and faults, but a wise pastor will never speak of them, especially in the presence of those who like to gossip about their neighbors. He should always hold up the virtues of the absent party who is being criticized and thus try to heal the breach.

We have heard of pastors in past years, who, when they visited their people, seemed to be seeking material help for themselves, rather than trying to render spiritual help to their people. We remember of hearing how one of these pastors would go among the farmers and tell how well he liked fresh pork, so when the farmers dressed their pigs he always received a gift of a nice piece of pork. Another preacher would tell the people even from the pulpit how very fond he was of roasted chicken, and the result was the good women of the church who wanted to please their pastor, very often invited him to a chicken dinner. Well, we have sometimes wondered what those generous church members thought of preachers who were always looking for something to put into their stomachs, and whether their calls were an advantage, and profitable to the work of God, or unprofitable.

But, in spite of all the disadvantages that may arise in pastoral visitation, or all the weaknesses in preachers which may be cited, we are persuaded that pastoral visitation can be a very important and blessed part of the preachers' work. First, there are always people in the community who because of advanced age, illness or home cares, etc., cannot get to church. We feel that these have the first claim upon the pastor's calling time. These have their problems, burdens, and often heart-aches, which the faithful pastor will take upon his heart, and help to bear. We know a pastor who called recently on one of God's shut-ins, sang and read scripture and prayed with her, and with tears of gratitude in her eyes she said his call was as good as a sermon.

Again, there are always some weak ones among the flock, who seem to need special care. The pastor can often minister to these by visiting them at the right time, and in the right spirit. There are often parents in his congregation who are greatly concerned about their wayward children or about the safety of their boys who are in the army. These will be helped and greatly encouraged if their pastor comes in and joins them in prayer for the salvation and safety of their loved ones.

And finally, there are a great many people these days in our towns and communities who seldom, or never go to church at all, hence, rarely hear the gospel. The faithful pastor will always be looking for opportunities to meet these indifferent ones. Often when trouble comes to their homes, one of the family is ill, or perhaps dies, the preacher may find that he is welcome if he calls on these sorrowing ones. They seem