

Miss Viola Church, June 48

# 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."

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### THE DECLINE IN GODLY LEADERSHIP

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The active leadership of the Gospel wing of the Church in America has in recent years largely passed out of the hands of men of solid Christian character, and has gone over into the control of young men who are remarkable neither for their learning nor for their godliness but who possess a flair for publicity, boundless ambition, and a pretty fair talent for successful promotion. Gravity has been pushed aside to make place for cleverness, and the novice is now in the saddle, in direct violation of the solemn warning of the Apostle Paul.

The giants of the Kingdom who lived and wrought a generation or two ago are now gone. While they lived among us, they led the Church by the sheer power of their gifts and the admitted superiority of their personal characters. But, strange as it may be, while they themselves were mighty men, and men of renown, they were not able to sire a spiritual progeny equal to themselves, so that as they left us, one by one, their mantles fell upon men very much inferior to them in ability, learning and piety. The generation now in charge consists of the sons and grandsons of the old spiritual heroes, and great has been the decline from year to year.

Though it may seem a gloomy conclusion, we must assume either that the race of spiritual giants is now extinct within the borders of evangelical orthodoxy, or that if some do exist, they are for some reason strangely inarticulate, for it is hardly an uncharitable deduction that spiritual greatness is not discoverable in the lives and labors of our modern propagandists.

One of the woes pronounced upon Israel at one time was that her princes should be children. God said He would take away from Jerusalem and Judah the mighty man, the judge, the prophet, the prudent and the ancient, the honorable man and the counsellor, and would give children to be their princes, and make babes to rule over them. However much it may be deplored, it is yet not a singular nor uncommon thing for the more worthy to be led by the less worthy for it is often true that the mighty in a given field are silent while the quasi-great are loud in their outcries. Of course, the public, being neutral, will usually follow the most persistent voice. Plato said that the penalty good men pay for failure to take part in political matters is to be ruled over by bad men. Sound, God-honoring believers in our day have to a large degree surrendered their leadership to lesser men who are not their equal in godliness, but who are

hungry for power, and so are ready to take over at the first opportunity.

Many of our latter day Gospel programs bear a disturbing similarity to the familiar radio show. All the elements are present: the sponsor, the product, the artists, the show, and the commercials. The sponsor who is assumed to be back of it all is the Lord; the product is the Gospel; the artists are the various "stars" of the evangelistic firmament, both speakers and singers; the show is the demonstration these "stars" put on for the entertainment of the public; and the commercial is the dutiful plug which is introduced ever so often in favor of the Lord and the Gospel. The whole thing is a fair imitation of the soap-opera. The discriminating listener is left with the feeling that the artist has a following altogether apart from his sponsor, and that if he were to switch sponsors, his fans would simply switch with him, and go right on enjoying the program.

Brethren, "these things ought not so to be." The true witness has no "act" apart from the Lord. His act is to reveal his Lord. He will have no acceptance where his Lord is rejected, and he is accepted only as and where his Lord is welcomed. Samuel was rejected from ruling over Israel, but only after Israel had first rejected God.

The need today is for leaders identified so fully with the cross-carrying Jesus that they have no life apart from Him, no ambition but to make Him appear glorious in the sight of men. Such as these will seek no place, no reputation. Christ himself will be their glory and their all.

He is a poor and wretched example of a Christian who will accept a seat at a banquet where his Lord is not welcome, who will bask in the sunshine of a friendship which his Lord cannot share. The true servant will ask nothing better than to be where Jesus is, to stand or fall with Him in esteem of men, to suffer or rejoice with Him at all times.

At a time like this every real Christian must make his decision, whether he shall drift along with the religious times, weakly going wherever noisy promoters take him, or whether he shall stand to resist the movements which tend away from the sound and solid things of spiritual religion. The Christian with spiritual vision and courage to follow it will not long hesitate as to which course to take. He will set his house in order and prepare to bear his cross along with his Saviour.

Right here is the place to discuss the matter of the various movements and organizations that are springing up in these days like grass in the back pasture. What should be the atti-

tude of the God-honoring Christian toward these many clamorous bidders for his support and loyalty? The answer can not be given in one sentence; yet it is not hard to find our bearings if we but have a little independence of judgment, and the courage to stand alone.

A few such organizations there are which command the respect of the Christian public, and for that reason are worthy of our support. But for the most part, the many organizations springing into bloom here and there are no more than visible evidence of fear on the part of some and ambition on the part of others. The ambitious will lead, and the timid will follow. The result is a multiplicity of overlapping groups consuming millions of dollars each year to keep up offices and pay salaries for the carrying on of projects which, it is morally certain, that God never started. From all such we are in duty bound to turn away.

Every movement that solicits our support should be put to the test of sound Christian godliness. We have a perfect right to ask to see its credentials before we cast in our lot with it. We are, in fact, commanded in the inspired Word to do so, and when we fail, we disobey. We should ask, first, who is the hero of the piece: Christ or some star of the religious firmament. Next, are they who guide the project saintly and self-denying men whose records show them to be wholly concerned with the honor of God? Is there evidence of the travail of the Holy Ghost in the movement, or was it born painlessly at a get-together luncheon somewhere? Is there any real need for the organization, or is it a duplication of already existing means of accomplishing the very same thing? Will our money, if we pay it into their treasury, be used to spread the message of dying love, and to encourage believers to seek to be Christ-like? Will we be assisting men and women to live in all meekness, to study to mind their own business, to live godly at home and attend to their duties as pilgrims to eternity, or will we be giving to the support of over-paid men who know not what sacrifice is? Will we be promoting the personal glory of publicity-hungry men, or truly supporting the work of the Holy Ghost in this generation?

Before we join any religious parades we had better pause and find out where we are going. We must all appear before the judgment seat sooner or later, to receive the things done in the body. Now, we have opportunity to call our shots. It will be too late, then.

It may be justly said that the writer of these lines is of all men the least worthy to Call Jesus Lord, or to speak in His sinless name. Nevertheless, I have a soul to save, a

(Continued on Page 5)