

KEEPING LITTLE AND KEEPING GOD

"When thou wast little in thine own sight."
1 Samuel 15:17.

The foregoing are God's words of reproof to Saul, Israel's first king. All Bible readers are quite familiar with the most interesting and yet sad story of King Saul's life.

God called him, and sent Samuel to anoint him king, and under God's blessing Saul was very successful in subduing the nations which were the enemies of God's people; but evidently he could not stand prosperity for as he grew in material prosperity and military strength, he lost sight of the fact, like many others have, that his help came from God. So instead of waiting upon God, and waiting for God to undertake for him in a time of testing, he assumed the office of priest, a responsibility which God had not laid upon him and he was not fitted for, so was out of divine order. He offered a sacrifice instead of waiting for Samuel. This grieved God's Holy Spirit and was probably the beginning of his backsliding, and eventually his apostasy, suicide, and hell, because God took His Spirit from him. 2 Sam. 7:15.

What serious blunders men in God's work have made, because they did not take time to wait upon God until He revealed His will and led them in His way. They no doubt were doing what they thought was best, but results proved that they were following their own spirit instead of God's. Their blunders cost the church a lot of money which might have been put to better use in God's work, and left a better feeling in the minds of those who gave the money. As the old saying goes: "Haste makes waste," and God says: "He that believeth shall not make haste." The world says: "Hurry, let us be doing things." God says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, etc." King Saul did not wait God's time. When men or churches get big in their own sight, then they think that they can get on very well and do things without much help from God. Oh, they still, like Saul, go on professing to be doing the will of God, but the bleating sheep and lowing oxen of their blunders tell a different story.

But some one asks: "Does not God want men and churches to grow and make progress in His work?" We say, He surely does, for He has commanded us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But growing in grace will keep us little in our own sight. It is when we lose the grace of humility that we get big in our own sight, like King Saul! We only have to look at men and churches to see a demonstration of this fact.

There are churches that have hundreds and thousands of members, with large and costly church buildings, well equipped, beautifully furnished, and very comfortable, having a well educated ministry and a large choir of well trained singers, and yet with all this (which could be a great asset to the work of God if he had control of it) they never see a soul saved, and what is more they make no definite effort toward that end. And I say, judging from what we read of such churches, they were small and poor in the beginning of their career, but because they were little in their own sight, they depended upon God for help, prayed much and sacrificed their own comfort, and were mighty through Him in promoting revivals and seeing thousands of souls definitely saved and gloriously sanctified. But now how different? We are surely living in

the Laodicean age of the church, as described in Revelation 3:17: "Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." What a contrast between their opinion of themselves and God's estimation of them!

You say, "Brother, that can't happen to us. We are holiness people." Oh, yes it can, and has and still is happening to so-called holiness people, for many thousands of people called Methodists who were professed followers of John Wesley's teaching which church was born in a holiness revival, have become completely apostacized from real gospel truth, and don't believe the teaching of God's Word any more. Many more of us who profess much grace are quite rapidly growing up in our own sight, and are emphasizing human effort, and entertainment for young people rather than spirituality. And

We have our organized sports

Where the girls dress in shorts

And play basketball

With men of all sorts.

Where these things exist you won't find young people or the churches which put the emphasis on entertainment very spiritual. They would rather attend an entertainment than a real live testimony and prayer meeting. Oh, they are growing up, in their own sight, but the way up is down in God's sight. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." We can remember when the founders of the holiness churches used to say: "It isn't more offices or more machinery or wheels we need on this old gospel chariot to make it go—it is more power to run what we already have. "And we say that power can only come from God, in answer to mighty believing, prevailing prayer.

The Sunday before Christmas we had the opportunity of listening to a so-called big preacher in a big church where there was a great choir of good voices singing the old Christmas carols which we enjoyed. During the preacher's sermon in which he said some fine things about the advent of Jesus, the Son of God, he also said, "And we are all by nature children of God." This he repeated more than once. At the close of the service the preacher was standing near the rear of the church receiving congratulations from the people and shaking their hands. As we passed him we also shook his hand and said: "Please excuse me, sir. I am wondering if I understood you correctly. Did you say we are all children of God by nature?" He admitted that I had heard him correctly. "But, sir," I replied, "that is not what the Bible says. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he wrote: "We are by nature the children of wrath." The preacher looked a little embarrassed and replied: "But I doubt it." I said, "But, sir, that does not change the teaching of the inspired Word. If we are children of God by nature, then we don't need a Saviour." As there were many people near, and some listening to our talk, he looked more embarrassed and turned away saying, we could discuss that subject a long time. But I kept on, now addressing my remarks to some of the people. I said, "We become children of God by grace through faith. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Here again I got a revelation of what kind of preaching many people who attend church are getting. Only a few Protestant people in the big cities attend church at all. The Roman Catholic churches seem to be well attended, but judging from what I see of

them out of church I fear that they don't receive much good from what they hear when they do go.

It seems as if the world's people have lost their respect for the churches and are plunging into sin and pleasure seeking as never before. All kinds of crime are on the increase.

Here in Hartford, Conn., murders, suicides, robberies, are common, almost daily occurrences. The old-fashioned taverns, of which there are many, with all their attendant evils, seem to be doing a thriving business, opened day and night, week-day and Sunday alike.

And judging from what we read in the secular press, conditions are about the same all over this great country and much the same in Canada and worse in Europe and other countries overseas, where wars are again beginning to rage and to again endanger world peace. And is there no remedy? We answer yes, God is the remedy and the only one. He is still on the throne, and has made great promises to His people if they will humble themselves, confess their sin, and backsliding, and pray He has promised to hear prayer and forgive their sin, and heal their land. We believe that if many of the so-called holiness people who have been backsliden in heart for years would lead the way, humble themselves, confess and get restored, revival fires would begin to burn.

But Oh, how hard it is to say, I was wrong. Someone has said, "No church has ever yet been known to confess to its own backsliding." That is the only thing that can bring God back again and save us from final apostasy. Will we do it? We purpose by the grace of God to keep on praying, preaching, and witnessing to both great and small as we have opportunity and make 1949, if we are spared to see it, the best year of our life. If we do not stay here, we expect, by the grace and mercy of God, and through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to go to that better country.

We want to take this opportunity to say thank you, to all our friends who again remembered us this Christmas season with beautiful cards and letters, gifts of money, etc., and say, God Bless you all, and give you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Yours in Christian love,

H. S. DOW,

42 Benton Street,

Hartford, Conn., U.S.A.

THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDERS

By Rev. F. A. Daw

Editor, Canadian Free Methodist

Many and glorious are the promises and predictions made of a certain Child whose birthday once again we commemorate. Some of those predictions have had a most literal and wonderful fulfillment. The whole world has been enriched and blessed because He came, and because of the glad tidings of great joy which offered salvation to a lost and ruined race.

And now after nearly two thousand years of the unfolding of the unsearchable riches of this great Gift to man, the world awaits the next stage in the revelation of the "fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

The prophecy of Isaiah which heads this article had the beginning of its fulfillment in the spiritual empire which Christ sets up in the hearts of regenerated mankind which, in spite of all opposition, grows stronger and greater in extent as the years roll on. The time is nearer than ever when it can be said