

# Sisters All!

Dear Martha,

Your second letter arrived today, just as I was about to answer your first one. There really was no need for you to apologize for writing me when you felt "down in the dumps and everything looked dark." I have felt that way myself and can both understand and sympathize with your state of mind.

Wherever did the idea come from that a Christian should be always joyful? David was a man of great faith, and yet he speaks often of his despondency. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul," he cried in Psalm 69. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."

Some of the greatest saints have suffered spells of extreme discouragement, even melancholia. Charles Wesley is a well-known example. We have no clear explanation why even the most devout Christian has these times of heaviness—our grandparents called them "times of testing" — but they seem to be as normal to the consecrated life as the dark, cold sleep of winter is to the plant. As the natural plant clings to its hold on life and waits for spring, so the Christian keeps hold of his faith and waits for God's grace to lift him from the "deep mire" of dejection.

This sounds simple, but it is not easy. Depression of this sort is brought on by a combination of outward and inner circumstances that often defy analysis. Its very intangibility is harder to bear than a grave problem with a known cause. When calamity comes, friends and loved ones rally around, offering help and sympathy and prayers. There is real power in this kind of support. Disaster calls for some sort of action, which forces one to shake off his lethargy and dig into his deeper reserves of energy and stamina.

But a prolonged mood of discouragement does not call forth such resources. You may, in fact, repel your friends by your very gloominess, just when you need them most. You struggle on alone, unable to determine the cause or help yourself. Should you go to a doctor, a psychiatrist, or the altar? The more you ponder, the deeper you sink in the Slough of Despond. Prayers, sermons, the Bible, all seem just so many words. Where is God? Why doesn't He hear and respond to your desperate need?

First of all, God is there, whether we are aware of Him or not. We have contacted Him in the past, and what has been before will be again. There may be a curtain between us and God, but He is behind it. This is faith — "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Second, don't expect the revelation of God to come in one great flash of light. The way into the gloomy depths of depression is often a slow, largely unconscious, process. The way out will also be slow, and it demands all of one's conscious determination just to keep going. Watch for every tiny pinpoint of light, and keep moving toward it. Read your Bible with care, listen thoughtfully to every spiritual message, use devotional helps and prayers even though the meaning hardly reaches you. In time, it will.

Sometimes you have to operate on the basis of mind, not mood. Someone is dependent on you, and there is work to be done, whether you feel like it or not. There may not be much excitement in devotion to duty, but there is a healing comfort in small, daily tasks well performed, and in the knowledge that you are needed.

These efforts may appear too insignificant to penetrate

## FROM SHELBURNE, N. S.

Dear Highway Readers:

Christian Regards!

A year and a half has past since we answered God's call to minister here at Sandy Point and Ingomar. We shall not soon forget our first pastorate at Londonderry. The experiences, blessings, and fellowship with the people has enriched our hearts. It is our prayer that the Lord will bless the work at Londonderry.

Since coming to this area of the work we have been assured of God's call upon our lives. We rejoice as to how the Lord leads.

In both churches there are those who love the Lord, and are desirous of God's best for their lives. We praise the Lord for men and women, and young people who have taken their stand for the Lord, and against sin and evil.

We are thankful for the kindness and thoughtfulness of the people throughout the year. Upon moving into the parsonage, which has been rented, a 'house-warming' was given, at which time we received a good supply of pantry goods. At Christmas time we received a purse of money; and just recently on "Thanksgiving Sunday," a festival of fruits, vegetables, preserves, and a gift of money was presented to us.

This past Spring we had revival services in the church at Sandy Point, with Rev. Hazen Ricker as the Evangelist. The services proved to be a time of blessing and victory. The preaching was blessed of God, and a number received help at the altar of prayer, and are still enjoying victory.

On November 4th Special Services concluded in the new church at Ingomar, with Rev. W. L. Fernley as the Speaker. They were the first Special Meetings in the church since it was dedicated a year ago last June.

During the services, a man and his wife, and a fourteen year old boy gave their hearts to the Lord. We rejoice with them, and pray that they will continue on with the Lord. The messages were timely, and were well accepted by the people of the community. While the visible results of the area were not outstanding, we believe the services have helped to establish a warmer feeling between the church and people.

We were favoured on the last Sunday to have William Norris as Special Singer. The Lord used his singing to inspire and bless our hearts. We pray God's blessing upon him in the future.

Last Spring the chimney was built for the church at Ingomar and a furnace installed. We hope to enjoy the benefits of the same this coming winter. We are in hopes to have pews for the church shortly. The church at Sandy Point has been repainted outside, which has improved the appearance. Plans are being proposed for the building of a parsonage in the near future.

We praise the Lord for His blessings. However, the needs are great. We covet your earnest prayers for the work.

In the Interest of Souls,  
Gerald and Auralie Inman

such spiritual desolation. Nevertheless, any action at all is better than none. As long as you are moving, however slowly, you are still alive. The struggle to keep faith with God and man is never in vain. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

And that is the final key that opens the door out of the cave into God's sunlight: your confidence—faith—that this despondency will not last. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Your loving sister, Mary

The King's Highway