

## **Living Advertisements**

*Neal Ellis*

We are living in an age of advertising. There is no doubt that advertising is at a higher level than ever before in the history of the world.

Billions of dollars are spent annually – even daily – for advertising locally, nationally, and throughout the planet. Every new product introduced to the consuming public is lavishly advertised.

New methods of advertising are found every day. Not long ago, advertising was the engine that ran our newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Now it is an essential part of even our telephones, computers, and what is known as social media.

This brings up an important question. Doesn't the church of our Lord deserve at least as much attention as these material things?

In the church, though, we think of another kind of advertising – Living Advertisements. This idea is expressed by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3:1-3. “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”

We are thus declared to be living epistles or living advertisements. Jesus had the same responsibility in mind when he said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16).

The gospel must, of course, be publicly proclaimed, but it must also be forcefully lived. Each follower of Christ is charged with the responsibility of so conducting his life that he may become a living advertisement for God.

The average man of the world does not read his Bible. Hence his conception of God, Christ, and the church is not gained from reading the Bible, but rather it is found by observing the lives of the disciples of Christ – by reading their living advertisements.

Do you claim to be a follower of Christ? Then what kind of advertisement for Christ and his church are you?

Just as some advertisements of material things fail to accomplish its intended purpose, so it is that some of our living advertisements miss the mark and fail to give the world a proper conception of the church and its worth.

Christ established the church pure and holy; it was without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. Today, the integrity and moral purity of the congregation depends upon the lives of those who compose the membership of the church. The congregation cannot be one iota purer than the lives of its members. Therefore, we (the disciples of Christ) are responsible for all spots, wrinkles, blemishes, and every disgraceful and embarrassing moment the church has suffered.

The divine provisions for the church were perfect. So when our lives fail to maintain the Lord's standard of purity, our living advertisements fail. When we are tempted to do some worldly things, when we find ourselves with an indifferent attitude toward shouldering our part of the Christian duty, let us stop and ask: What kind of advertisement will this be for Jesus?

*Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today  
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way  
He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died  
He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.*

*We are the only Bible the careless world will read,  
We are the sinner's gospel; we are the scoffer's creed;  
We are the Lord's last message, given in word and deed;  
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?*

*What if our hands are busy with other work than His?  
What if our feet are walking where sin's allurements are?  
What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?  
How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?*

“Christ Has No Hands But Our Hands”