

The King's Highway.

And an Highway shall there be, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness:

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah 35:8.

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Altar Work.

From Heart Talk Rev. B. Carradine D. D.

It requires a good deal to be successful in altar work. It takes courage to begin the work, and deadness to human opinion to carry it on. It demands patience to carry it on, wisdom, gentleness, mental quickness, abundance of resource, victorious faith, and power with God to run the altar successfully. John S. Inskip was an acknowledged king here. He could take charge at a moment, when under a lifeless sermon and drooping service, all hope of victory would be gone from the most sanguine, and in five minutes a great triumph would be seen, and salvation free and full would flow like a mighty tide.

Not all are as gifted and as wonderfully qualified for leadership as Inskip; but all can be effective, and under God's blessing, have victory over Satan, sin, and the world in every altar battle.

While the writer has seen the wisdom of certain methods, the power attending some kinds of propositions, yet he would not rely on them. He has observed that the indispensable preparation and qualification for a successful altar-worker is a calm, strong faith, and an overflowing experience of holiness. A man full of the Holy Ghost carries with him a sphere of spiritual influence which is soon felt at the altar. His ringing words, shining face, buoyant spirit, perfect confidence in and reliance upon God, inspires faith, causes the seeker to pray and expect and finally to receive with rapturous heart and speech the blessings of pardon and purity.

Yet even the spiritual and successful worker will find, that what will do one time will not answer at another. The Spirit is a free Spirit, and will not work in one groove. He is the leader himself, and would have us to follow him.

Then, again, the mental and spiritual condition of those at the altar is not always the same. Sometimes consecration is to be emphasized; at other times faith. Sometimes prayer is needed; on other occasions the seekers need to be urged to step out on the promises. On some occasions singing is felt to be the need; and again the best work is done when every thing is still, and souls are left with Christ, to deal with him personally and alone. In most of my meetings I gladly use all the workers I can get, and have seen God's blessing many times on their labors; but in one of my services I called off the workers, and told the seekers to look to Christ alone, without human help. They did so, and the power began at once to come down, and the fire to fall, and there ensued one of the most wonderful scenes of grace I ever beheld.

Singing is almost invariably used in getting people to the altar; and yet one night although a volume of inspiring song filled the house, so few were coming forward, that I requested perfect silence, and in the stillness which followed asked all who wanted pardon or holiness to come to the altar, and instantly there was a rush. We never know at first which method the Spirit is going to bless, and so have to follow on softly, looking to him for guidance. He will always lead if we are to be true to him.

This very difference in his leadings

makes us to realize our dependence upon him all the time, and, while using the means of grace and "methods," as we call them, we feel that all are in vain without the Holy Ghost.

As we have just said, we can never tell at first what the Spirit is going to bless. Some days every proper, strong, and wise effort will have been put forth and there was no answering fire from heaven, when suddenly, on the utterance of a few simple words, the Holy Ghost will fall.

One day I had done everything I could. The altar was full, and not a soul was "getting through," as it is called. Wearing in mind and body, I arose and said:

"It is just the question whether we will believe God or not. He has said certain things, and left them in his book. Are they true or not? He says, 'The altar sanctifieth the gift.' Will you believe it or not?"

I had hardly gotten the words out of my mouth, when three or four people leaped to their feet, with illuminated faces and rejoicing in the blessing.

It seemed to me that I had said the same thing repeatedly and much more strikingly before; but somehow the Power came down this time, and the glory of God filled and altar and the people.

In a meeting one night in Kentucky, the altar was filled with men and women; but not a soul could be converted or sanctified. The preacher exhorted and instructed, the brethren prayed, the choir and audience sang, but everything was locked up. Suddenly a young married woman from the country, dressed plainly in calico with unadorned straw hat on her head, and her baby on her arm, began walking down the side of the altar. As she walked, she with her disengaged hand would touch the bowed heads, or gently pat the shoulders of the seekers. As she did so, she was singing in a sweet, unaffected way:

"Come, O come to me, said Jesus;
Come, and I will give you rest;
I will take away the burden
From thy heavy laden breast;
No matter who the wanderer,
Nor how far he's gone astray,
Behold whosoever cometh,
I will comfort him to-day."

The scene which followed could scarcely be credited, if it had not been witnessed by hundreds. There was something in the very touch and helplessness of this simple, devout woman, which the Holy Ghost wanted; and as her voice sounded and hand descended, the Spirit fell first upon one and then another, until leaping to their feet, the altar was surrounded by a now laughing, crying, shouting company of saved and sanctified souls.

As an illustration of good sense and readiness to change and adapt one's self to the hour, with the view of extricating and delivering a meeting that was at a low ebb, I recall the following scene:

The preacher had labored hard in the pulpit for an hour one warm night. The sermon was a failure. Not only the preacher saw it, but the congregation felt it. The preacher sat down and called a certain minister to conclude. As the latter arose, a number wondered what on earth he proposed doing, and could do. Every eye was on him as he came slowly forward, and stood quietly looking at the great audience before him. He was a young man, and had a task before him which older heads might

well have dreaded. For a full moment he stood silent, with a solemn, almost abstracted look, and then began singing:

"Oh, 't was love, 't was wondrous love;
The love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above,
To die on Calvary."

At once the vision of the dying Saviour was brought up to the minds of the people, and that with immediate melting effect. Here was no call to come to the altar, no covering up with apologies for a pulpit failure; but an appeal to consider the love of God in the form of his dying Son hanging on the cross. How trifling seemed all excuses for holding back from duty and God with that crucified figure before us!

The hymn, so well known, went on, and when the singer reached the last stanza, the weeping was general, and heads bowed all over the building. The preacher then lifted his hand, and said, "All who would like to come and bow down at the altar for pardon and sanctification, can do so,"—and instantly there was a rush from all sides. The people literally fell down, while such soul-sobs and cries went upward as must have made heaven rejoice.

I have been often amused at preachers rushing at the beginning of one of these great altar conflicts to the choir and there singing most lustily. They wanted to be the brass band on a neighboring hill and furnish music, while from afar they watched the battle. More than once I told them that they were in easy position—that it is far easier to sing in the choir than work in the altar. It takes but little knowledge of musical notes to bring one into a singing band; but to work patiently and successfully with the people at the altar requires a number of things, not only knowledge of God, and a close walk with God, but knowledge of self and knowledge of men. Souls have to be dealt with in wisdom and love. They can not be forced, but must be led. I have seen people driven from the altar by coarse manners and offensive questions. If ever we need good sense; tact, patience, sympathy, love, firmness, and a good religious experience it is in the altar work.

Beer in a Coffin.

Even though my moments are precious, I want to tell you of just one experience. I went to the city hall in Portland, and the officers were showing me many curious things; how they had invented this device, and that device, and another device for violating the prohibitory law. Why, I had been reading in the Chicago papers that they sold liquor in Maine just as they sold it in Illinois; and I read in the New York papers that they sold it in Maine just as they sold it in New York. Well, I did not know then as much as I know now about the very great reliability of a certain class of daily newspapers; and so I went down to see for myself. I went that night into the room of the city hall. An officer took a key out of his pocket and led me down a corridor, opened a door, took me into a dim room in the basement; the windows were covered with dust and cobwebs. As my eyes became accustomed to the darkness I found I was standing, elbowing almost, against a pretty decent-looking coffin. I pulled off my hat of course; I was

in the presence of the dead. The officer began thumping around with the screws, and he pushed the coffin to one side, and then I beheld not the face of the late lamented, but ten or twelve dozens of bottles of beer, packed in straw; and this officer told me that he and a fellow officer took that coffin the day before out of a baggage car on the Boston & Maine road, having received a telephone tip the day before from a nearby town. And—God save the mark!—but a woman, dressed in mourning, and with a long crepe veil reaching from her head to her heels, was riding in the passenger coach behind, and passed up a first class ticket for the transportation of her dead husband's remains.

Now that is the way they violate the law in Maine. They do violate it, but I am here to tell you that the restrictive features of the law of the state of Wisconsin are more frequently violated in the city of Milwaukee than the prohibitory law of Maine is violated in the city of Bangor or of Portland.—Way of Faith.

Inexpressible Sighings.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8:26. There must have been something deeper, beyond the ordinary in prayer in the Apostolic age. When we consider what the expression the apostle here uses really means, we wonder where is there such prayer today? Rotherham translates the words "Groanings that cannot be uttered," "sighings unutterable." The Euphatic Diaglott has it: "The Spirit itself intercedes with unspoken groans. There are seasons in the Christian's life when he feels his needs so greatly that he cannot express them in words. He knows—the Spirit within him moves him to pray for something that is in advance of his past experience, but he does not know what it is, or what to call it. The Psalmist of old when he sang, 'As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God,' felt in these ardent, though inarticulate pantings a presage of fulfilment of his hope in God. So the devout Christian feels his soul going after God in inexpressible sighings. Here and there are found such at present who are conscious of a hitherto unrealized need in their soul, and the spirit within them prays in unutterable sighings for this need, and Oh, blessed be God, they realize that "He that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit," and their inexpressible desires to the full Praise His name.—Gospel Banner.

A Plausible Excuse.

There are some selfish, narrow-minded souls, who cry out, "It is all very well to talk about sending the Gospel to the heathen, but we have them at our doors and charity begins at home." For such persons we present a few facts:

First. Ninety-eight per cent of the contributions for religious purposes is spent at home, while only two per cent is given to the foreign field. Yet there are some who seemingly begrudge even that small amount and steadfastly refuse to make it any larger.

Second. The Moravians are poor and few in number, having a membership of about 30,000; still, their yearly average for foreign missions is the sum

of \$12 per member, and every fiftieth member is a foreign missionary. Now what is the result of this noble sacrifice? The Moravians have, in heathen countries, three times as large a membership as in Christian lands. See how God honors their liberality.

Third. The increase in converts to Christianity in heathen lands is thirty times greater than in proportion to the number of ministers employed, although the tests of discipleship are of the most trying nature.

Fourth. The Bible says, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."—Sel.

Race Suicide.

The Rev. C. L. Cady, of Dorchester, Mass., is represented as sounding a note of warning in regard to what is known as "race suicide," and which he thinks is rapidly exterminating the churches of the Puritan faith in Massachusetts and New England. He says:

"Congregational families have ceased to perpetuate themselves. The days when the family came to church and filled one or two pews, as in our youth, are gone, and in their place we look in vain for the children in the church or in the house."

One of our Roman Catholic exchanges, in noticing his statement, gives voice to a sentiment which we think religious people everywhere would do well to seriously reflect upon. The editor says:

"We have in these words an impressive reminder of the penalties that are paid for the violation of God's laws. The sacredness of marriage, as taught by the Catholic Church, is an effective safeguard against the crimes which have produced the results which threaten such dire consequences to the descendants of New England Puritans. The crimes of which we have referred mean the commission of murder. Catholic husbands and wives have been taught this. Moreover they have learned that one of the chief ends of matrimony is to bring forth children, who after serving God in this world, will enjoy the beatific vision throughout all eternity. When this view of marriage does not exist, marriage degenerates into a species of concubinage in which the husband and wife are governed more by selfish motives than by a sense of solemn obligations they entered into when they pledged their solemn troth to each other."—Western Christian Advocate.

"Let it be our happiness this day to add to the happiness of those around us, to comfort some sorrow, to relieve some want; to add some strength to our neighbor's virtue."

The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew it would never be found out.—Anon.

"A profitable servant does his assigned duty and at the same time minds his employer's interest."

Problems in Arithmetic.

"I am not much of a mathematician," said the cigarette, but I can add to a youth's nervous troubles, I can subtract from his physical energy, I can multiply his aches and pains, I can divide his mental powers, I can take interest from his work, and discount his chances for success."—New York Observer.