

# King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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All correspondence for The Highway should reach us before the 12th and 25th of each month. Address to Rev. S. A. Baker, Fredericton, N. B.

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## SAVED, YET SO AS BY FIRE.

(From the Weekly Globe and Canadian Farmer.)

The following on the Sunday School lesson of March 9th, by Rev. G. C. Pidgeon, D. D., of Vancouver, B. C., contains so much timely truth for Christian people, who take their families into ungodly surroundings for the sake of money making, that we consider it well worth repeating.—*Editor.*

Lot was rescued from Sodom; yet we think far more about what he lost than of what he saved. His own poor, wrecked life was spared, but of what use was it to him, with his family ruined, and the property for which he had lived destroyed, and his own future shattered beyond the possibility of repair? This suggests the first lesson of the tragedy:

(1) It is one thing to escape from sin's punishment, and another thing totally different to bring one's soul and one's family out from its evil influences uncorrupted. Lot was himself a righteous man. We miss entirely the lesson of his sad experience unless we recognize this. Abraham assumes this in Genesis 18: 16-23, and his whole intercessory prayer proceeds on this basis. Peter states specifically that he was righteous and was vexed in soul with the wickedness of Sodom (Peter 2: 7). Yet Lot was a worldling. He was thoroughly capable. It is true that he was not too scrupulous about how he secured his opportunity, as we saw in a previous lesson (Gen. 13), and he seemed to lack a fine sense of honor. But he was far too clear-sighted and competent a man

of affairs to waste his strength and befoul his soul in the loathsome vices of Sodom. He dealt with them in business, but in everything else he was a man apart.

Yet his whole family became thoroughly saturated with the evil of Sodom. They lost all sense of God. Those who had married laughed him to scorn when he told them of the city's impending doom (verse 14). And the two daughters who accompanied him were so deeply corrupted that it would have been better for them and for the world if they had perished.

Now how could the family of such a virtuous man become so completely saturated with the evil of their environment? The reason is that Lot compromised with Sodom for the sake of gain. He went down there solely for its wealth (Gen. 13: 10-11). He thought he could divide his family life into separate compartments, and keep apart from Sodom's social life while taking an active part in their business life. He failed miserably. The atmosphere of Sodom penetrated into every corner of his home, and all who breathed it were defiled. Many men make the same mistake now. They take their families into an evil environment thinking that they can keep them uncontaminated while they make money in the midst of evil. Lot's experience has shewn what the result will be.

Lot did not give his family as good a chance as he had himself. His own formative years were spent in the pure atmosphere of Abraham's home. Their formative years were spent in Sodom. Lot's character was formed before he went to Sodom and he was safe. Their characters were being formed while in Sodom, and they took on the quality of their environment.

Never was there a more striking illustration than Lot's of the truth that example is more powerful than precept. Lot denounced the Sodomites (verses 7-8: II. Peter 2:7), yet he dealt with them. His children seem to have felt that if the men of Sodom were good enough for their father to deal with, their families were good enough for his family to associate with. Hence they went for pleasure to the same place that their father frequented for gain. The money made in Sodom was spent among the Sodomites. And Sodom gave in return the fullness of its life.

Multitudes of men in the materialistic age make Lot's mistake. They feel that they can mingle and deal with evil men without being corrupted. They do not see why their families should not be as safe. But they forget that they are not giving their children the same chance as they had. They were brought up in a Christian home. Every influence around them was spiritual. They are letting their children grow up in worldly homes. Every influence around them is unspiritual. The parents may denounce sin as Lot did, and enjoin virtue; but there is nothing commanding and dominating in the temper of the home. And their words are paralyzed by the fact that they mingle with the people whose doings they denounce. And, say what they will, their children will seek pleasure where they seek power and gain.

Is it not possible, then, to be in the world but not of it? Yes. But not in a world that we patronize. One might as well try to shut the air out of a house as to shut the moral atmosphere of our associations out of our homes. It will penetrate into every life, and touch its vital processes for good or ill.

Lot's story shows that a good man can take his family into Sodom, but may not be able to get them out. Moody used to tell of a middle-aged man who was converted in a meeting in a western city. When the great decision was made, he was filled with joy. The next day he came back in utter dejection. The evangelist asked if he had lost his hold of God's grace. He answered: "No. But I went to my children last night and spoke to them of my decision, and everyone of them treated me as a fool." His is the experience of many men, themselves good, who lead their families into worldly surroundings. The influences drew them quite away from God. When the parents awake to the danger, they will strike in vain to win them back.

Next, the wealth acquired in Sodom shared Sodom's fate. This had happened before (Gen. 14), but Lot refused to take the warning. Now, we cannot say that all the money made as Lot's was made will share the fate that his met. But how often does unsanctified wealth prove a curse to a family! When the character is bad, wealth simply gives increased opportunity for evil.

Note in conclusion the following points:

- (1) That Lot was saved at all was to Abraham's intercessory prayer (Gen. 18:16-23). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5: 16).
- (2) The urgency of the angels in hastening Lot out of Sodom is remarkable. They showed their power in many ways (verses 10-11). And they knew the danger. In a powerful sermon on this incident, Rev. John McNeill holds their urgency up as an example for Christian workers, and urges all to earnestness in saving men.
- (3) The Golden Text points the moral of the whole tragedy in insisting on the need of separation. Christian people are safe in a sinful world only when they oppose its evil in every way, and have nothing to do with what their conscience condemns.

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The loss of our missionary church is a call to greater faith and greater efforts. It is the Lord's work. Let there be hearty and cheerful co-operation.

Be such a man, live such a life that if every man were such as you and every life a life like yours, this earth would be a paradise.—Phillips Brooks.

"And wisest he in this whole wide land  
Of hoarding till bent and grey;  
For all you can hold in your cold dead hand  
Is what you have given away."

—Joaquin Miller.