

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8.

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Mrs Geo Teddie Dec 24

Are We Losing the Spirit of Prayer?

Are we losing the prayer life out of our church? We recall distinctly, a score or more of years ago, how naturally and frequently conferences and church conventions were brought to their feet in prayer. They were not content with formal devotions at the opening of a session, but at unexpected moments, when a bit of good providence was revealed, a perplexing problem faced, or a brother overtaken in sorrow, prayers were called for and offered in feeling. Thus interspersed with prayer, the conference proceeded to its close. We say this was more or less the fashion twenty-five years ago.

It is different today. We do not recall any such halting of the "order of the day" for the injection of prayer. Maybe our memory is inaccurate. Maybe we are obsessed with the fancy that the past was a golden age. But that is the way it impresses us. In all the conferences we have attended this fall we do not remember of one prayer offered other than the more or less formal petition at the opening; and yet more than once do we recall such serious and perplexing affairs under discussion that the perfectly natural resort would be in prayer for guidance and light.

Are we to be charged with unwarranted assurance and an utter disregard of precept from the highest possible source? A study of the New Testament and especially of the crises in the life of our Lord and Savior will disclose a frequent resort to the fountain-head of all power.

As soon as Jesus had received baptism by John, He offered prayer with the result that the heavens opened immediately (Luke 3:21).

After He had performed a great work like healing the leper, He retired to the desert to pray (Luke 5:16).

Ere He engaged in one of the most delicate tasks of His ministry—the choosing of those who should be His companions—He spent a night in prayer (Luke 6:12).

Before conversing with His disciples on matters of grave importance He engaged in prayer.—Luke 9:18.

One of the most significant events in the life of our Saviour resulted from praying on the Mount of Transfiguration—(Luke 9:28, 29).

While our Lord was in the throes of His deepest anguish on the cross He did not forget to pray—(Luke 23:46).

It is needless to proceed. Enough has been indicated to show that prayer was a determining element in our Master's life and without it He could not have carried on His work; that He invariably prefaced an event or a task with a resort to the source of all power.

Turning from this story of prayer in the conduct of the Savior's life to the proceedings of the present-day assembly where supposedly

grave and difficult problems weigh heavily, the contrast is marked. We were interested recently watching a workman cutting delicately into wood following the lines of a pattern. A searchlight was at his side which from time to time he would reach for and turn upon the board littered with chips. Thus alternating between carving and inspecting through the flood of light, he proceeded to the close.

That is the idea. It does not take much discussion to so confuse an individual or group that doubt as to the proceeding arises. Too, at the instant flash the rays of revealing power on our words is but following the example of our Lord Himself.

Again the question: Are we losing the prayer life out of our church? The most significant answer appertains to the one-time prayer meeting that is today undergoing evolutionary processes both as to name (for the "mid-week" meeting and later the "church night" have all but supplanted the original name) and character. The prayer meeting of yesterday has been the subject of considerable critical comment because of the introspective and individualistic character of the prayers and testimonies. But the reaction has swung us to the other extreme of so reducing public prayer in our weekly gathering that there is reason abundant for ceasing to disregard the hour as a "prayer service."

Prayer has slipped from the family life; the altar has gone out of the home; even the old-time pastoral call that was not considered such until prayer was lifted for the members of the household, seems rarely to be engaged in.

Grant that in a measure the old-time prayers sprang from a rather selfish conception of religion, the question forces itself: Has there come a more profitable substitute into the life of the church? As we have been engaged in whittling our petitions, first, to "brief" prayer, and then to "sentence" prayers, and finally down to the vanishing point, what has taken its place? We do not believe anything has so far as modern religious activity is concerned, we are very far in advance of yesterday, but prayer has all but become a lost art.

And now that the church night is becoming so popular, there is further danger of loss by the gradual elimination of prayer. The prayer meeting evening is the one seized upon, and conscientious vows are, no doubt, indulged that the prayer life shall not suffer by the innovation. But the tendency is against such pledge, by squeezing the designated "hour" into a half-hour, or less, with an evident feeling of impatience to get to the more popular parts of the evening. Thirty members meeting week by week in the spirit and service of prayer will mean more for the kingdom than three hundred who present

themselves in a purely social or recreative spirit. The church night is a happy discovery—happy so long as prayer and devotions are given their rightful and primal place. Otherwise it were better the church keep in the old way.

When the prayer life wanes either in an individual or a church, the power goes out of life. We must keep the prayer channels open. We must do everything in our power to keep the heavenly traffic moving by means of the prayer fleet. Without a well-developed prayer life in the church the most pretentious programs will fail; with that prayer life kept fresh and active all things are possible.—*Northwestern Christian Advocate.*

Holiness of heart and life is the supreme truth proclaimed throughout the Bible. If we would be saved we must feel that holiness is vital to our soul's need, and grasp it with a clear completeness of conviction, and hold it with a trustful, abiding faith. Holiness is the adequate truth that opens to our soul the way to all that is embraced in the salvation of the soul. If we reject holiness in the process of our salvation we can proceed no further.

There is no such thing as salvation without holiness. You can no more have salvation without holiness, than you can have gold dollars without gold. A religion without holiness is a positively God-alienated form of religion. The supposition that we can have religion without holiness is absolutely inadmissible.

The Christianity of Christ is holy, and nothing can make it not to be. To be without holiness is to be without God. The very first initial step in the Christian religion is holiness begun or the entering upon the path of holiness.

Holiness of heart and of life is God's idea of normal religious life. Holiness is purity; holiness is God's all-conquering and everlasting "perfect love;" and "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." It is the office of the Holy Ghost to transform the soul into the image of God, and thus deliver it from all sin, and to fill it with purity and power.—*Sel.*

No greater calamity could befall the holiness movement than for it to become popular. Its high doctrines must be exemplified in the pure lives and heroic sacrifices of its adherents, else it will prove a curse to the world. Popularize the movement and there would at once flow into it a vast number of holiness people who are not only holy people—having the form, but knowing nothing of the power, of godliness. Trials, tribulations and persecutions act as a sieve to separate the sensual, ease-loving, carnal professors from the pure grain.—*Sel.*