

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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127

THE LAST HANDFUL

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"Elijah said unto her, Fear not, but go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."—I. Kings 17:13-16.

The darkest hour of Israel's sin was marked by the advent of the greatest of Israel's prophets. As men place their best lighthouses on the most dangerous coasts, so where sin abounds, there God's grace doth much more abound. Elijah represents the ministers of God and the messengers of heaven in every age. Like a flaming star he had flashed across the reign of the wicked Ahab and had hurled in his face the awful message of judgment, "As the Lord God liveth, before whom I stand there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Then as suddenly as the meteor vanishes, he had passed out of sight and the angry and distracted king sought for him in vain over all the land. But God was taking care of His servant. Away up on the banks of the Jordan, and perhaps on the border of the land of Gilead, his own country, the prophet was safely hid by the brook Cherith, and the ravens were bringing him morning and evening his daily portion of bread.

But soon even the little mountain brook dried up and the prophet must look elsewhere for his support. And so the command came to him, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." And across the breadth of the land he took his journey and entered at eventide the gates of the little city. Just at this moment his hostess came out to gather a few sticks to prepare the last meal for herself and her little son, for the famine had sorely stricken this land also, and there was neither bread nor water except of the scantiest measure. At the word of the Lord the prophet accosted her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." As she

went to fetch, he called again as though the Lord would gradually and gently prepare her mind for the great test that He was bringing. "Bring me also, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." Then it was that her spirit broke. The water she would spare, but the bread was too much as yet for her hospitality to venture. How pathetic the cry of distress, "As the Lord Thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat and die." Then came the mighty message of faith, "Fear not, go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." How simple and sublime the story and the sequel. "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days," or as the margin says, a full year.

What has this beautiful ancient picture to do with missions?

1. We have here a Beautiful Picture of Fellowship in Service and in Missionary Work. Elijah represents the missionary and his widow his supporter. For a whole year this humble and destitute woman supported a missionary all alone to show us what faith can still do through us in the Master's work. The work of missions is mutual. God intends that he two sides of it shall always be jointly maintained. It is not a matter for the independent worker who takes a notion to go to some distant field and preach the Gospel; but it is just as much the responsibility of you and me at home, if we cannot go, to stand back of some one else who can. Therefore the first missionaries were sent forth from Antioch while the church at Antioch stood behind them, commending them to the grace of God, welcoming them back, and then sending them forth again. God might just as well have still continued to support Elijah by the ravens of the wilderness, but He wanted to establish this precedent and leave this pattern for other workers in all the coming ages. He might still send an army of angels to proclaim His message to the world, or supply the

needs of those who do it, but He has chosen to make His people partners in this glorious trust.

II. We learn that God Loves to Use the Humble and the Poor as His Chosen Instruments of Highest Service. He did not send Elijah to be the guest of Obadiah, the wealthy and noble cabinet minister of Ahab, who was his loyal friend, and who could have cared for him without the slightest sacrifice. But He sent him to a poor widow in the heathen country of Sidon. We sometimes wonder why God does not lead the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts to give their millions to God for the world's evangelization; but instead He seems to be dependent upon "a poor and despised company" of obscure people like ourselves and like most of those who are sustaining the work of missions today. The truth is, God never has cared to lean upon the rich, the great, the wise or the strong, lest men should claim the glory. Some one has said, "He shows how little He cares for money by the kind of people to whom He gives the most of it." This is no mere accident, but the rule in the Kingdom of God. "Ye see your calling, brethren," the apostle says, "how that not many wise men, not many great men after the flesh are called, but God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to those that love Him." So the founders of Christianity were the poor fishermen of Galilee. The first testimony of the leading apostle was, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." One of the old saints well said, "When the church ceased to say, Silver and Gold have I none, she also ceased to say, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." The pioneers of modern missions were poor people. It was a lot of humble peasants, without influence or money, who led Zinzendorf to form the great Moravian missionary society, and to begin the most glorious work of modern times. Today a great proportion of the missionary of the church comes from people like the widow of Zarephath. Do not, therefore, excuse yourself from the responsibility or be discouraged in your efforts, because you are humble and poor.

III. The Place of Sacrifice in the Service of God. Already this woman had

(Continued on Page 2)