

# 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.

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## THE CHIEF SIN OF THE WORLD.

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*And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come He will convince the world of sin . . . because they believe not on me (John 16:8,9).*

This is one of the very remarkable texts of the Bible. I fear few Bible readers comprehend its stupendous meaning. For instance: It is not strange that Jesus did not say, "The Holy Spirit will convince the world of the sin of cruelty?" It was a most inhuman age. Augustus was emperor when Jesus was born; and he mentioned in his will that he had exhibited in the amphitheatre 5,510 wild beasts and eight thousand gladiators for the delight of the Roman populace. Titus, called the darling of the human race, brought into the amphitheatre five thousand beasts and thousands of Jews to fight each other to death. In Trajan's games eleven thousand beasts and ten thousand men fought until the place swam with blood. And when anyone in the vast audience of eighty thousand exhibited any sympathy for a dying victim, it was not considered "good form," and an officer would lead him out of the assembly. Unspeakable cruelty! Yet there was something in the sight of God more cruel than that.

Again was it not strange that Jesus did not say, "He will convince the world of the sin of gluttony"? It was an age beastly with gluttony and drunkenness. It was a maxim of philosophers. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." It is a matter of history that the very lordliest of the Romans would sit at a feast and first partake of an emetic, and then fill their stomachs. Afterwards when the emetic had done its work, they could have the disgusting pleasure of eating a second meal. But that was not the chief sin. There was something in the sight of God more odious than that.

Again, is it not strange that Jesus did not say, "The Holy Spirit will convince the world of the sin of slavery"? The night which Jesus spent in that upper chamber, and spoke this text, mantled with its darkness the agonies and tragedies of sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire. Each master had over his slave the power of life and death. If a slave did not, when dressing a Roman matron's hair, set the jewels right to suit her, she might, in a frenzy of rage, order him out to be crucified, and nobody would call her to account for it. Slavery was then, and remained, what David Livingstone called it, "the open sore of the world." Yet there was a sin more abhorrent than slavery.

Again, was it not strange that Jesus did not say, "The Holy Spirit shall convince the world of the sin of sensuality"? The great Cato made over his wife Martia to Hortensius; and afterward took her back as a rich widow! In the time of Martial a public prize was actually offered to any man who would transmit a legitimate

family to posterity. Yet there was a sin more hateful to God and more fatal to the soul than that. None of these things was the chief sin in the sight of God. Notice the wonder of it: "The Holy Spirit shall come and convince the world of sin *because they believe not on me.*"

1. No one would think this the chief sin by the way men act. You ask two-thirds of the people you meet on the streets or anywhere if they are believing on Jesus for salvation, and they will answer with a grin, or at least without shame, that they are not. They seem to have no conscience about it *whatever.*

This is not the worst of it. Round up the preachers and theological professors in our supposedly Christian seminaries and put the same question to them. A large number of them will tell you, if they are honest, "No, we do not believe in His deity." "We do not believe in His theanthropic, 'God-man,' human and divine nature." "We do not believe in His supernatural birth or nature." "We do not believe that He rose from the dead or ascended into heaven." Such men deny every essential of Christianity and are no more Christian than were the unbelieving heathen of eighteen hundred and fifty years ago. Yet in their heathenishness they have fallen so low as to think it perfectly honorable to stand in a Christian pulpit, heap infidel contempt upon Christ, and draw their salary, while sowing their infidelity and doing what they can to damn the whole congregation.

If anyone wants to know what God thinks of this sin of not believing on His Son, let him read Josephus and learn what unparalleled vials of wrath and rivers of blood God poured out on the doomed city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. II. Notice why this is the chief sin of the world.

1. It is the most coolly deliberate and voluntary. Men swear just from force of habit, without any purpose or premeditation. So they lie and drink without thinking much about it beforehand! But this sin is different. It is deliberately determined. A boy feels the call of salvation at ten years of age and rejects it. At twenty God patiently renews the offer of grace, and he continues his previous rejection. At thirty, with still more vigor, he says "No" to Christ. He repeats it at forty, at fifty, at sixty. A half century now of determined, wilful, insulting rejection of the Son of God. The sin of it mounts to the very heavens.

2. It is the chief sin because of its injustice. If a humble man should buy a piece of land and pay for it, and then be defrauded out of the title, the sentiment of the community and the laws and courts of the land would be against the defrauder! But who owns us? Who created us? Jesus. Who has preserved us? Jesus. Who

loved us enough to die for us that we might be redeemed from the penalty of sin? Jesus. After all this, any moral being can see that it is the rankest injustice to rob the Son of God of our confidence and trust.

3. It is the chief sin because of its cruel ingratitude. At Kensington, near Chicago, an engineer, Frank Hazen, rounding a curve, saw an obstruction on the track. He might have jumped and saved himself. But he stayed at his post, reversed the engine, whistled for the brakes, and went to death himself, but saved every passenger on the train. Suppose they had not been grateful.

Many years ago a deadly plague was ravaging Marseilles, France. The people were dying in great numbers, and the doctors did not know how to treat the sick. The medical society was called together, and the president said, "We do not know how to treat the victims of this awful plague and cannot know until some physician diagnoses a victim, and writes to us what he finds, and how to treat it; but it is death to the man that does it. Who will do it?" After a solemn pause Dr. Guyon rose with white face and said, "I will do it, sir." He wrote a message to his family; went to the hospital, dissected a victim of the plague, wrote out his findings; threw it out of the window, and lay down and died. But the people were saved. Suppose they had not been grateful. Humanity would have said that Dr. Guyon was worth a city of such conscienceless, ungrateful people. But what about Christ, who gave Himself for us all? And so many are not even grateful.

4. It is an affront to the honor and government of God. The greatest problem of our great country today is how to deal with crime and criminals. It is not easy for a government to show criminals mercy, lest they conclude that they can sin with impunity, and so proceed to break down all law and government. The infinitely wise God could find no other way to pardon sinners than by way of atonement. And when sinners contemptuously rejected the atoning Saviour they strike a deliberate blow at the government and glory of God. They scorn His mercy and challenge His wrath.

5. It tramples on the love of God. Love is the most sacred thing in the universe. God gave His Son in love. Jesus consented to be given in love. He came in love, suffered in love, died in love, and now pleads for our confidence and gratitude for His affection. To reject Him now is to scorn His affection.

5. I tramples on the love of God. Love is very heart of God.

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