

The King's Highway

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Editor and Business Manager - Rev. P. J. Trafton
Committee:

Revs. P. J. Trafton, H. C. Archer, H. C. Mullen
I. F. Kierstead, H. S. Mullen

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EDITORIAL

It is now nearing the time when the Church will be considering the calling of a minister for the coming denominational year, and some churches have already done so. We are sure that this matter should be given careful and prayerful consideration. We believe that the holy spirit should be consulted on such matters. It was while the Church at Antioch fasted that the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, etc. Please note how much the Holy Ghost had to do in this matter. The Holy Ghost is the representative of the Godhead, carrying on the work which Jesus began in the world, and to him must be ascribed the attributes of God for he is God. We verily believe if there was more fasting and praying, to find out the will of God, there would be less mistakes made. There are times when men should remain in some places for a longer period than at others, then there are times when a man should leave. A man who is filled with the Holy Ghost will never be out of a job. If a door closes in one quarter, another will be open in some other quarter. It takes a lot more grace sometimes to stay with the few, if the Lord wants you there, than to go into evangelistic work or open up new fields. The early Apostles went forth when the Church had prayed and laid hands on them, the Holy Ghost was with them and supplied their need, they did not have their living guaranteed before they started. God is still on the Throne. Let the Church wait on God. Let the pastors be faithful to their trust, and wait on God, and we are sure that the Holy Spirit will direct aright. A man called of God and directed by the Holy Spirit need never fear. The Church that will unite to wait on God in fasting and prayer to have the Holy Spirit direct will be directed aright.

God is always ready to go before us. Indeed, we never can go anywhere victoriously unless He does lead us. To go without Him into any of life's experience—struggles, dangers, or duties—is to fail.

CONQUEROR CHRIST

(Continued from Page One)

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and the lusts." The body becomes not a sovereign but a servant. Its imperious demands are silenced; the reign of riotous living is succeeded by the rule of reason and of grace. By "the expulsive power of a new affection" carnal desires are displaced and the soul is filled with hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. "With ashes who would grudge to part, when called on angels' bread to feast?" When his father had led him into the banqueting house with love's banner flying there, do you think that the prodigal son longed for his suppers with the swine? When the Hebrews were reveling in the rich milk and fragrant honey of the Land of Promise, would they yearn for the strong, ill-smelling leeks and garlic of the Bondage Land?

Christ, knowing that the human spirit "abhors a vacuum," supplies infinitely better things in place of those that we are commanded to give up. "We do not miss the moon when the sun is shining."

The Lord Jesus makes us victors over ambition. There is lawful, commendable ambition; there is wrong, unhallowed ambition. The one is God-born; it is the mother of success in life. The other is Hell-begotten, and means ruin to the soul. By the grace of Christ we may know shining triumph over ravenous desires for fame and power and glory, and be joyfully willing to spend our lives in lowly stations, if it be the sweet will of the Self-conquered One who when the splendor of the kingdoms of this world was offered him, refused all its promised renown and magnificence. From the summit of that "exceedingly high mountain" of temptation, he saw another Mount Calvary, and chose a death of shame and agony upon it. Not for him the victorious sword of the warrior and the sceptre of a golden throne. He preferred the cross.

And eventually he won a brighter and more enduring glory than that of all the men who have achieved world dominion. Napoleon himself testified to it. On St. Helena he wrote, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for him."

When ambition comes to us and holds out the likeness of a kingly crown, through the sweet might of Christ's grace we reject that coronation of self, remembering that he who would be great must be as one that serves. We choose Nazareth, and not Rome. With joy we say, "Not I, but Christ"; "He must increase, but I must decrease." So triumphant is the Redeemer's constraining love.

The Lord Jesus makes us victors over avarice. He removes from the garden of our soul the root of all sorts of evil, the love of money. In that spiritual Eden there is caused to grow "a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign." Then our hearts know the "rest" that is "glorious." Knowing the unsearchable riches of Christ, we are not consumed by the deadly fever of those who would be rich. We seek to be "rich in good works"; to be "rich in faith." Though we may be forced to say, as did Peter to the cripple at the Beautiful Gate, "Silver and gold have I none," at the same time we may say with Paul, "As poor, yet making many rich."

One of the saddest pictures in the Gospel Gallery is that of the rich young ruler leaving Christ's presence with sorrow, because he was not willing to consecrate his great possessions to

the Master's service. But one of the most joyous scenes portrayed in the Bible is that which we see in the fourth chapter of the Acts, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostle's feet; and distribution was made unto every man as he had need." Human language is inadequate to describe the sweetness of that satisfaction known by those who leave all to walk in the steps of him, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. The grace of God is mightier than the lure of gold.

Then Christ makes us victorious over suffering and sorrow. The world is very full of these; they are no respecters of persons. Sooner or later all must know their dread arrival. But Conqueror Christ will be with us still. In words that sound like sweet celestial music, he assures us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And this majestic Lover of our souls whispers, "Peace I leave with you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is indeed not "peace without victory," but peace with victory.

Very great and precious are the promises to overcomers in the second and third chapters of Revelation. In them we find the dynamics of victory. "He that overcometh," "To him that overcometh," "Him that overcometh," seven times we hear the word sounded, as if all the morning stars were singing together and making the august music of the spheres.

In the original Greek the word for "overcome" of these passages might be correctly translated, "conquer." It is the conquering Christ who speaks the word. He prevailed with a cross, and if we heed his word and bear our cross daily and follow him, he will lead us to a glory and triumph and power with which the glory and triumph and power of Napoleon's men are not worthy to be compared. By the gentleness of him who is meek and lowly in heart we are made great. And a hundred thousand years from now we shall be shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father, celebrating the praises of him by whose blood and by faith in whom we conquered.

Is he your emperor? Are you knowing the victory that Conqueror Christ shares with those who follow Him? Have you yielded your will to him, so that you can say, "Galilean, thou hast conquered?" If so, the world is all before you where to choose your own conquests.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

"On his head were many crowns."

"And he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

"His name is called the Word of God."

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Boston, Mass.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

Transmuter of the cross to shrine,
Spirit of prayer abide with Thine,
For mourning give anointing oil of joy,
The kingdom's wine bestow
In bottles new, preserving both.

This trinity of gifts impart
To every humble, tarrying heart,
Making them all of one accord
To bring the kingdom of their Lord.

—B. T. Gaskin.

THE MAN WHO PRAYED TOO OFTEN

We used to hear it said in prayer, "Thou art not wearied by our oft coming to Thee," but we think there are limitations in the application of the saying. That is, it depends upon the reason for our oft coming. It is indeed easily possible to weary the Lord by coming to Him too often about some things.

The twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth and thirty-first chapters of Numbers contain the story of a man who prayed too often and wearied God with his oft coming. This man was Balaam. There are many things favorable to the case of this man. It appears that he knew and worshipped the true God, and that he was in the habit of receiving oracles from Him. He does not seem to have had any vicious desire to curse Israel either before he knew that God had chosen to bless them, or after he had obtained that knowledge. And even his advice to Balak to make alliances with Israel may not have been altogether as bad in his own purpose as its consequences showed it to be in reality.

But the evil thing about Balaam was that he "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and the intimation is that he lived on the fruitage of such. He feared God, but he was covetous of money and honor. He was not ready to openly disobey God, but he very much desired to please the king and curry favor with the princes. At best, his goodness was mixed and his desire for self-promotion was strong.

The messengers of Balak came to engage the services of Balaam in Moab's war against Israel. Very properly Balaam postponed his answer to give time for prayer. The very first answer was clear and unequivocal. "God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." But this answer was not to Balaam's liking, and when he gave its substance to the waiting messengers in the morning he did not fail to intimate that he himself was willing to go; for he said, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." In this he studiously concealed the reason for the divine prohibition and opened the way for further negotiations. And when the second embassy came he said, "I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." A commentator says, "The divine will, as formerly declared, not being according to his desires, he hoped by a second request to bend it, as he had already bent his own conscience to his ruling passions of pride and covetousness. The permission granted to Balaam is in accordance with the ordinary procedure of Providence. God often gives up men to follow the impulse of their own desires; but there is no approval in thus leaving them to act at the prompting of their own wicked hearts."

Now Balaam's second prayer was irreligious and wearied God and got the prophet into trouble which resulted in his own violent death. His first answer was plain and should have been entirely sufficient, and it would have been proper for Balaam to have positively refused to pray another time over the matter. He should have considered the matter settled and should have made his conviction so plain to the king's party that there would have been no second appeal. He parleyed and argued with God and was lost in so doing.

We do not care to discuss here the mooted question of God's "second choice for those who will not accept His best." If any want to say that there is no middle ground between fullest obe-

dience and disobedience we know not how to answer their arguments. If others insist that "there is a sin which is not unto death," that is, there is a reluctance to obey which results in a punishment by consequences, rather than by a summary breaking off of relations, then we do not wish to fight testimony on that. But what we do wish is to say that the kind of obedience that God loves is the glad and instant obedience which takes God's first answer as final and seeks not to bend the divine decision.

After his first prayer Balaam was clear as to what his duty was. But after he had prayed the second time, he became misty and uncertain and required the assistance of the dumb ass speaking with man's voice to save him from untimely destruction. Perhaps there is significance in that it was the animal which is the strongest type of dumbness that was used to teach the prophet, who but a little while ago had clear communication with God.

And how many professing Christians are there who are so misled by their own desires that they pray oftener than they ought when the first answer does not agree with their desires! At first they ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Then when the answer comes clear and unequivocal, they flounder and beg and weep and plead and press and question until they are enveloped in uncertainty. This is often the case with young people when the question of their life's calling is in the balance. It is the case many times when business policies are to be fixed. It is the case when paying a tithe of one's income to the work of the Church, or when the making of gifts for the promotion of the kingdom is before the bar of conscience. It is the case many times when any task which is disagreeable to the flesh is required.

We once knew a woman, a widow, and a very devout Christian. She had long been a pillar in the work of Christ in her community and her testimony was heard and accepted in a very wide circle. But after many years, in widowhood, she finally married a man who was an unbeliever. In discussing the matter with friends, her explanation was as follows: "I know that the Bible says, 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' and that we have always understood this to mean, among other things, that Christians should not marry sinners—and I believe this is true on general principles. And when Mr. A—began showing me attention, this scripture and the arguments I have heard and believed on the matter came to me and I felt that, of a certainty, I could never marry him. But as time went on and Mr. A—was so kind and so pleasant, I began to feel that, if it were not contrary to the Bible, I could love him and marry him. Then after a while, I discovered that I did really love him, and then I found myself wishing I could marry him, and I prayed over the matter a great deal. And after three months of earnest praying and beseeching the Lord, I obtained permission to marry Mr. A—. I did so and we are happy and I do not have a doubt about the matter. I did not backslide, but followed out a divine permission."

There were some who felt to accept the explanation, and to feel that a special dispensation of permissive grace had been granted in this case, contrary to the Bible, and contrary to the general conscience of sanctified Christians. But twelve or fifteen years later, we met this woman again, and when we inquired after the welfare of her husband, she explained that they were no longer living together and that indeed the husband had secured a divorce. We remarked that this must be a dreadful disappointment and mental torture. But she replied that, bad as it is, it is better than what she had endured while attempt-

ing to keep the home together, for said she, "I lived in an earthly hell for over ten years while trying to be a wife to Mr. A—."

Here was the case of a woman who prayed too often. After her first prayer she was clear as to her duty, but after repeated prayers she became unsettled and uncertain and then—by divine permission, as she believed—plunged into an awful and far-reaching mistake. How much better it would have been if she had prayed but once and had accepted the answer from God and made that the end.

In most of instances we all need to be exhorted to pray oftener and to pray longer, but on matters of duty—whether it be a positive command or a negative prohibition—when God answers, it is time for us to leave off praying on that and go on to work out the life which God's answer involves.

David is a worthy example of those who quit praying when they get God's answer, even when that answer crosses their plans and desires. David set his heart upon building a permanent house of worship for the Lord in Jerusalem. And indeed this seemed to the prophet Nathan to be a worthy climax to the life of the king who was "a man after God's own heart." But after the decision was made and the preliminaries were really started, behold word came that this building project was not of the Lord's good pleasure and that it should await the genius of David's successor. And David did not talk back to God nor pine in disappointment. He gladly and immediately acceded to God's choice and set about to do all he could in preparation for the work for which another would get the glory. It is only when we are as willing to take the Lord's "No" for our answer as to take His "Yes" that we are really in position to take any answer at all. And our confidence in both His Wisdom and His goodness will enable us to accept the first answer He gives us and not weary Him with further quibbling.—Dr. J. B. Chapman, *Herald of Holiness*.

IN THE SILENCE

By Virginia M. Sager

Into the Silence—away from the crowd,
Far from the highway—alone to meet God.
Into the Silence—my Master draws near,
Close there beside me—He speaks words of cheer.

Over the Silence—His Spirit bends low,
Whispers, "I need you"—I answer, "I'll go."

Out from the Silence—I come forth again,
Ready to serve Him—the Saviour of men.

LIFE

Life is a gift to be used every day,
Not to be smothered and hidden away;
It isn't a thing to be stored in the chest
Where you gather your keepsakes and treasure
your best;

It isn't a joy to be sipped now and then
And promptly put back in a dark place again.

Life is a gift that the humblest may boast of
And one that the humblest may well make the
most of.

Get out and live it each hour of the day,
Wear it and use it as much as you may;
Don't keep it in niches and corners and groves.
You'll find that in service its beauty improves.

—Edgar A. Guest.