

# 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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### CHRISTIAN GIVING

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This is a subject upon which much has been said and written but there is a crying need that much more be said and written. Just so long as people fail in their duty and privilege in this regard there will be need for someone to speak. That there is need is very sadly apparent to the person who has interest enough to stop one brief half minute to think of it. The amount that is given by the church in comparison to what is spent for other things, even useless things, is simply heart-sickening, and absurdly small. There is no one thing that will show the indifference and faithlessness of the professors of religion more than the pitifully small amount they are willing to give for the support of God's cause. No one single matter has caused the writer more doubts about the genuineness of some people's religion than their tightness in money matters. When one sees people having plenty to spend for their own pleasure, money for all kinds of luxuries, and even going to extravagance, and they professing to love the Lord, and then giving almost nothing to the support of the church, it is pretty hard to have confidence in their sincerity. The only thing that can be done is to give them the benefit of the doubt on the ground that giving is one of the hardest lessons for most people to learn and consequently is usually the last thing to learn in the whole list of Christian activities. The love of money is one of the most universal affections of the human heart, and though almost every sinner will spend lavishly for that which will give him pleasure, yet when that same person gets converted he will shirk the responsibility of giving to the Lord's cause. I am firmly settled in the opinion that one reason why some people never join the church is because they do not want to become responsible for its finances.

I have formed some other opinions in regard to this matter just as shocking as this and have not formed them hastily either, but from long and careful observation. If one wants to find out something in regard to this, all they would have to do would be to do a little investigating. Just to begin with, take the minute book or financial report of the churches and reckon up the proportion given by each individual. For instance in a certain church I once averaged up how much each individual would give to missions, and by dividing the number of members into the total amount given, the result was just 35 cents apiece for the year. Now as a matter of fact some persons gave much more than this amount which would make the amount for some others still less than 35 cents. The fact that the average was so low simply showed how few were really giving anything to this important fund.

I recently heard a minister of another denomination tell from the pulpit how that a cer-

tain man and woman who were once his parishioners had for a number of years supplied the bread for the communion, and when he called one day they put in a claim and thought the church ought to give them \$2.00 to pay them for the bread. This may be one of the extreme cases but it illustrates what could be found if investigation should be made. Once when there was an audience of about 80 in the church, made up of about the average of professors and non professors, the total pieces of money was 25, so more than half put nothing in, and the largest piece was a 25 cent piece, and the whole offering amounted to a little over two dollars. Another time with an audience of about 300 the whole offering was \$12.00 which you will see just amounted to four cents for the average. And as there was a bill or two in this it simply proves that many never put in a thing.

Instances like these by the score, that have come under my notice have forced me to hold poor opinions of people's liberality when it comes to religious matters. There are of course shining exceptions and I recognize this, but as I have been trying to point out, when you find how much some individuals do give, it only goes to show by contrast how insignificant is the average.

Multitudes of people would think little of spending two or three dollars in a week for treats and a little pleasure and then go to church on Sunday and piously place ten cents on the plate and really think they had done something.

I don't like the word "giving" even though we seem to be compelled to use it for the lack of a better word, but I think "paying" would be better. I think a whole lot of folks don't give much because they think it is just giving, in the fullest sense of the term, and that they are getting nothing in return. But the truth is, if they could only see it and believe it, that dollar for dollar, the biggest returns have come from money spent for the work of the Kingdom. The very dollar itself would soon depreciate in value if there were no more churches, no more preaching of the gospel, no more Bibles. The very peace and safety that the infidel and the unbeliever enjoy in this land of blessing comes to them because someone was willing to expend time and money for the propagation of the gospel.

It is really surprising to me that so few ever take the matter of giving seriously or ever think that God has any claim upon their money. No subject is any plainer in the entire Bible; there is perhaps not a single book but what in some way or another refers to or suggests the subject of offering our gifts to the Lord. Even if people do not take the matter of tithing seriously no one could be so blind as to deny that the Bible teaches giving. The "Sermon on the Mount" in which Jesus the world's teacher was laying down the principles of Christianity, plainly states, "Give and it shall be given unto you," Luke 6:38. The parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16, has no other meaning than that we should be careful to make wise use of our money

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lay up spiritual and eternal blessings. The New Testament teaches more than tithing in any legal sense, it shows us that we are only stewards of all that we possess, and that money is to be held in sacred trust as from the Lord and all of it used to His glory, with a proportion of it set aside first for the work of the Kingdom. Paul said, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him". This teaches both giving and that there should be regularity and system. Again Paul shows clearly that it was the design and plan of God that the people should support the laborer in the Gospel. He says "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of His hope." Paul also humbly asks pardon from the Corinthians for not permitting them to support him, and confesses that he had wronged them.

He recognized that it was for the best good of the church that they should support the preacher, and said, "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong," 2 Cor. 12:13.

The truth is that when God calls a man to preach His gospel he calls the church to support that preacher. No one has any sympathy for the man who gets the call to preach but disobeys it, and most everybody would consign him to dire punishment, but there is just as good chance for the man who disobeys his call as for the church that disobeys its call. If souls are lost because men fail God in a call to preach, then souls will be lost because the church has failed in her duty to support the preacher and make it possible for him to be free to preach the gospel. There is no doubt but what the tightness of the churches in this regard is one of the chief reasons that so few young men are entering the ministry these days. Ministers are the poorest paid men of all the professions even where honest attempts are made to pay them, where there is some system for doing this and a salary is stipulated, but where this is not the case and preachers are told that they will receive the offerings, many times it means for the young man entering the ministry to face poverty and almost starvation sometimes, and to be under the necessity of doing manual labor to support himself. It takes a whole lot of consecration and more than a good many can furnish to face such a prospect. Some will say, "cannot they trust God?" Yes they can trust God but it is sometimes hard to trust the people through whom God is obliged to communicate His bounty. He very often gives it to the people but they consume it upon themselves and the preacher goes a-begging. Once when there was some discussion about raising money for the preacher, I heard a person in all candor remark,

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