

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness
THE ORGAN OF THE
REFORMED BAPTISTS OF CANADA

Published Semi-Monthly at Moncton, N. B.
by a Committee of the Alliance
Editor and Business Manager - Rev. H. S. Dow
— Committee —
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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Per year, in advance	\$1.50
Ministers, per year	1.00
Four months' trial subscription	.40
Sample Copy	Free
United States Subscribers	1.75
Ministers, U. S. A.	1.25

SPECIAL NOTICE

All correspondence for The Highway should reach us before the 12th and 25th of each month.
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MONCTON, N. B., SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1938

EDITORIAL

Why could not we cast him out?—Mark 9-28

Jesus, with three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, were on the mount of transfiguration, and while there, a certain man brought his son, who was possessed with a devil, to the other disciples that they might cast it out. but they were unable to do so. Then when Jesus and the three came down from the mount unto the multitude, the father of the afflicted boy came to Jesus and told him of the failure of the disciples, and said to Jesus, "If thou can'st do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Then Jesus replied in words which not only threw the responsibility back on the father, the one who was praying, but threw down a challenge to those who would ever after come to him in prayer seeking help. Read what he said, then ponder it seriously in your heart. Here are his words: "If Thou Can'st Believe, All Things are Possible to Him that Believeth." Now the question comes to us: Did our Lord mean just what he said? Did He expect his people to take this promise of his seriously? If he did not mean just what he said here, then what did he mean? and how much of his teaching are we to accept and act upon? If we cannot believe this saying of his, or if it is not true, then how can we believe anything? We may as well close the book, and put it back on the shelf with the thousands that men have written that are no longer read, and say, it was a good story. On the other hand, if these sayings of Jesus are true, then he has put a mighty responsibility on us, as his people who profess to believe his word, and say that he answers prayer. Hear the words again: If thou can'st believe all things are possible to him that believeth.

And when he was come into the house, his disciples came unto him privately, with the words of our text: Why could not we cast him out? Now these defeated disciples of his did the right thing in coming to him and enquiring why they had failed. Instead of trying to wash their hands of the responsibility, and to blame their failure on the hardness of men's hearts, as we often do when we hold special revival meetings and fail to see results. Or perhaps we try to explain what Jesus meant in these promises, or put our own interpretation on them and in so doing we have taken the teeth or bite out of them so they no longer gripe our souls, and make us feel our responsibility, and a sense of our guilt when we fail, or our prayers are not answered.

Quite recently while waiting on God in prayer, we got a fresh revelation of our responsibility to him in the matter of seeing answers to our prayers. Hence in this article I am trying to pass it along to others, that they may receive help also. Of course it is impossible to put on paper all that the Spirit reveals to us or the blessings that come to our souls. But, I saw that our tendency is to emphasize, or stress the power of the human will until in our thinking we make it superior to the power of God. How often we say, Well! God can't save men against their wills. That may be quite true, but, is it not possible that God can bring pressure on men, if we have the mustard seed faith that Jesus spoke of until they will want to be saved? If he cannot (and now I feel that we are on Holy Ground, so let us take off the shoes from our feet and tread softly). I say if God cannot bring pressure on unsaved men until they will want to be saved then the human will is stronger than God, and Jesus was wrong when he said, "All things are possible to him that believeth, and again: Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.

I think Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was about as hard a character as God ever had to deal with. When Moses who was sent of God went in to Pharaoh and told him that the God of Israel said, let my people go. Pharaoh said: Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, and let the people go. I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. So instead of obeying, he told Moses and Aaron to get out, and he increased the people's burdens and made them make brick without giving them straw, and the task-masters whipped them severely: But God's power was not exhausted. And Moses went to God in prayer again and again and God began to unleash his Judgments and bring plague after plague on Egypt and their king, until his stubborn will broke, and he was forward for prayers, and called for Moses and Aaron and said entreat the Lord for me, etc. A mighty change had come over him since Moses first spoke to him. Why? Because Moses really prayed and had that mustard seed faith that Jesus spoke of that could move mountains. Faith is the point of contact between the miracle working power of God and the needs of men.

Note again Jesus' answer to those defeated disciples when they came to him and said, Why could not we cast him out? He said because of your unbelief, or lack of faith. Beloved, is God not able to work miracles today? Will he not do so to fulfill his promises if need be? But you say how can I get that faith. Jesus answered that question also. See verse 29. This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. Some say he meant this kind of a devil. Perhaps he did, but remember he told them that they had suffered defeat because of their lack of faith, not because the devil was especially big, or strong, or men's hearts are hard or wills stubborn, or that they love sin. But because they, and we also, lack miracle working faith, which comes to those who fast and pray, and by which only God's power operates and we get results. Like the man that Jesus told us of in the parable who went to a friend for bread at midnight, and found him in bed with his children, and unwilling to get up. Jesus in stressing the importance of a faith that gets results, said, "Though he will not rise because he is your friend, yet because of your importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

In conclusion let me say this: If God could find among us men (and let us remember they were only men) like Moses and the many other heroes of faith spoken of in Heb. 11. He could and would still bring pressure to bear on men by working miracles that would cause their stubborn hearts to yield. I fear that our prayer life is for the most part so very formal, weak and anaemic that God does not pay much attention to us. Unless we get some response from God to our prayers, how do we know that he hears. It is not what we say to him that counts in prayer. It is rather when he speaks and what he says that is really the important feature about praying. When He talks back to us, that encourages us, and creates a faith which as the poet said, "laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done, and makes a point of contact between the miracle working power of God and the needs of men.

"Lord teach us to pray."

MUSIC IN WORSHIP

The best music has been rendered under trouble. The first duet that I know anything of was given by Paul and Silas when they sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them. The Scotch Covenanters, hounded by the dogs of persecution, sang the Psalms of David with more spirit than they have ever since been rendered.

There ought to be a great multitude of men and women willing to sing the praises of God. Those who can sing must throw their souls into the exercise, and those who cannot sing must learn how.

Have you ever noticed the construction of the human throat as indicative of what God means us to do with it? In only an ordinary throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles and thirty indirect muscles which can produce a very great variety of sounds. What does that mean? It means that you should sing! Do you suppose that God who gives you such a musical instrument as that intends to keep it shut? Suppose some great tyrant should get possession of the musical instruments of the world and should lock up the organ of Westminster Abbey and the organ of Lucerne and all the other great musical instruments of the world—you would call such a man as that a monster. And yet you are more wicked if, with the human voice, a musical instrument of more wonderful adaptation than all the musical instruments that men ever created, you shut it against the praise of God.—T. DeWitt Talmage.

THE HARDEST WORD!

I remember when a boy, I asked my father once which, to his mind, was the hardest word in the English language.

Without a moment's hesitation, he answered "No!"

"No?" I echoed in surprise.

"Exactly," he answered. "Not in spelling, as I suppose you mean. But you will find as you go along that it is the hardest word in the English language. I did. It was curious that I should be led into the profession—that of the editor—in which the use of this little adverb is so frequently necessary. And difficult it was attimes to say, as my father predicted. Yet few would choose this word, if asked, as the most difficult word in the language.—Edward W. Bok.