

# 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

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., APRIL 15th, 1940

No. 45

Mrs. Geo. Tedlie, Feb. 40

### MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VACILLATING

By W. E. Smith

1st Kings 18:21: And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow Him; but if Baal then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

The scene is a most memorable one. All Israel is called to judgment on the top of Mount Carmel. Elijah the rugged prophet from the mountains of Gilead is the prosecuting attorney, the conscience of the people is their judge while the prophet executes the judgment.

It is the same old story of apostasy of Israel from the worship and service of the true and living God and their enslavement to the immoral worship of Baal and Ashteroth. Very responsible for this apostasy was the weak and wicked King Ahab, and his diabolical queen Jezebel, whose name through all the ages has been a synonym for all that is cruel and vile. She was a daughter of the King of the Zidonians and thus had been nurtured in all the gross abominations of heathenism. When she married Ahab she was filled with an ambition to supplant the worship of Israel's God with the worship of her own deity. She found the weak king most responsive. His corrupt nature was glad to accept a religion and a god that would sanction all his licentious conduct. The fickle people so carnal in their nature, were glad of the change. Soon the altars of God were broken down to give place to the altars of Baal; the priests of Jehovah were either slain with the sword or compelled to hide themselves in the mountain caves. More than eight hundred heathen prophets fed at Jezebel's table, and received honors and favors from the royal court. It was indeed a dark time in Israel's history.

But God was standing in the shadows keeping watch above his own. Out in a solitary place He had a man in training to call Israel back to her former allegiance. A famine of more than three years' duration, according to Elijah's prophecy, had burned up the land. From the cot of the lowliest peasant to the court of the wicked royal pair, there was a cry of despair. Baal's prophets could bring no rain, and it was in this time of great national crisis that Elijah called the people to the top of Mount Carmel to test who was the true and living God.

It is not my purpose to take up the different phases of this event, but rather to deal with Elijah's challenge to the people for halting between two opinions.

This challenge reveals to us Israel's attitude in backsliding. While in soul and body they gave devotion to the gods that allowed them all manner of sinful pleasures, still, they were compelled to remember the goodness of the God of their fathers and all the deliverances he had accomplished for them in the past. They did not absolutely reject

the true God, but they were not prepared to return and give him their full allegiance—the only attitude that was acceptable.

Yes, we condemn Israel for their many backslidings and vacillating, but in spite of all our exalted privileges in this the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, are we much more stable? How many desire, not to wholly reject Jesus, but to divide their allegiance between him and the world! But it was Jesus Himself who said, "No man can serve two masters; he will either hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

I wish to show three phases of instability, all of which are closely related. First, there is the vacillation of mental attitude or in the thinking. That is, thinking one thing today about Jesus, salvation, and holiness, thinking another thing tomorrow.

The time of personal and national disaster causes the most trifling to do some serious thinking. When God's judgments are in the land the people must think of righteousness, even though they had not led to repentance. True, the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. The multitude today who on Sunday or during what conventional Christianity calls holy week, and during the Lenten season, think something of God. Sunday finds a multitude of people attending church, but if the mind be carnal, it is impossible even in the courts of the Lord's house to keep the mind from the world which they love better than they love God.

It is impossible for one with the carnal mind to think straight and with a steady consistency on doctrinal lines. The carnal mind is a doubting mind, and a multitude of people down in their heart of hearts have doubts about the Bible, about Jesus and the nature and limit of his salvation, about hell and heaven that they dare not reveal. There are few so bad but think at times of living a better life. They generally put that time ahead to the beginning of the New Year, or farther than that, after they are settled in life and have gained a competence; or even farther—to the very end when they hope to call upon God for mercy.

But such thoughts are often fleeting; they are soon crowded out by the thoughts inspired by the flesh, the world and Satan himself. If the unsaved were to think steadily for a few hours on the matter of death, judgment and Eternity, a desire would spring up to escape the wrath to come. A British Lord in the midst of a great ball-room gathering whirling in the rounds of the giddy dance, said the "sad thing about it is, not one of these will dare to go home and think seriously for an hour." When the enemy sees one given to serious thoughts he will do his best to change the direction of his mind, and in these days of jazz and fun and frolic, the

mind is so vacillating. Young people, especially, are easily swayed in their thinking. They have seen a good clean Christian life exemplified in the home and in the community. They know such people are different from the world or mere professors of religion. In their honest and sober moments they think this, but then the enemy comes and makes them think such a life is too straight, and too idealistic for this old workaday world. They must have some fun. All people who think differently from these narrow views cannot be going to hell. And so they finally think it is better to go with the crowd.

But again there is the vacillation of desire and of confession. We have known those who were so desirous of pleasing the one they were talking with, they would agree with the last speaker even though he directly contradicted the next to the last with whom they also agreed. The Israelites wanted to serve God with their lips but give their hearts' devotion to Baal.

How soon are the good desires of the spirit quenched by the upspringing of the flesh in the unsanctified heart! And unless the spiritual becomes the dominating power the flesh will soon win the day. Paul's picture in the seventh of Romans has all the coloring and outline of the carnal mind crushing out the spiritual mind, "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That is a real agonizing cry. It is the cry of one who is willing to take the remedy providing it shall be offered. But there is a possibility of this cry becoming a make believe cry, backed up by a spirit that protests against any possibility of deliverance.

I was told the other day of two young men who came from a popular church into a holiness church, where they professed to get the blessing of holiness of heart. I must believe they were converted and seemed to enjoy the preaching of holiness. They deplored the worldliness and coldness and formality of the church from which they had been delivered. But now their attitude is wholly changed. They have discovered that sanctification is not a work of grace by faith, but a process; they have discovered that God is not able to destroy all sin in the heart because they have not experienced it. They have gone back on the experience of holiness.

These dear young men are wiser than Paul and a multitude of the ablest interpreters of the word of God; they reject the testimony and experiences of ten thousand who in all ages of the church have testified to the experience of entire sanctification. We know that they have an experience now they can't shout over. They like so many, have thought they were sanctified when they were only

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