

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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EDITORIAL

"BY PRAYER AND FASTING"

Prayer is much preached, little practised. Its value is recognized by many, its rich rewards are enjoyed by few. As for fasting, that duty is neglected both in preaching and practice.

Matthew Henry, commenting on Zech. 12:10, said: "When God intends some great mercy for His people, He first sets them a-praying." Every great Spiritual awakening of the church's history has been preceded by earnest and faithful praying. Every great spiritual leader was first of all great in prayer. Failure on this point is a sufficient explanation for lack of success in our work. If we are prayerless, we need look for no other reason for spiritual unfruitfulness. If we are prayerless we must repent of neglect here and renew our intercessory ministry. No person, and no church, has any Scriptural grounds for explaining away lack of victory in the work of God, if the individual or group has not prayed as they should. That is, prayed earnestly "with strong crying and tears;" prayed importunately, "night and day without ceasing," prayed believingly, having faith that "God shall avenge His own elect that cry unto Him night and day." This is true prayer, and when we give ourselves to it we will not have to grope for explanations for barrenness for the mighty God of Jacob will touch us with a Divine power that will make us victorious.

"And fasting"—Few pray as they ought, fewer still fast and pray. And yet the practice of fasting was consistently observed in the New Testament times as well as in the early church. Christ said the children of the bride-chamber would fast when the bridegroom was taken away, but how many are doing so? Not one in a hundred, even in a moderate way. To many Christians, abstaining from food for a meal or a day's meals for the sake of giving themselves to prayer, is an unknown experience. The self-denial demanded is too unpleasant to the flesh, and many feel they would die if they did not have a hearty meal at the appointed time. But Christ said: This kind cometh not out except by prayer and fasting. In other words, you will find yourself unequal to certain situations if you have not fasted as well as prayed. This is the conclusion of the whole matter: For the difficult task confronting the Christian church of today victory is a glorious possibility. To prepare herself for successful warfare the same

church must recapture the spirit of self-renunciation and give herself to prayer and fasting. If God can find a group of people who will dare to believe this and act upon it, He will yet prove that "His glory is just as great as when Elijah felt its power." By precept and example the Lord urges us to prove Him and if we scrap our explanations of failure and prepare ourselves for battle, He will do "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

KEEPING FIRST THINGS FIRST

By the Associate Editor

But, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.—Matt. 6-23.

In this chapter from which our text is taken, our Lord is contrasting the value of Spiritual things, with that of temporal. You will notice that he does not say that we should not seek temporal things, such as food and clothing at all. No, He says, your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things, and he promises that they shall be added unto you. But in as much as spiritual blessings which pertain to the welfare of our souls, are of first importance, then we should seek to obtain and to promote spiritual things first, or "keep first things first."

We read in the gospel according to Luke that a certain man came to Jesus and said: I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And our Lord replied, the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. This reply of our Lord seemed to quench all the seeker's zeal, for he said nothing more. Another said, Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go bid farewell to them which are at home at my house. Jesus said unto him, no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

And our Lord said to a third one, follow me, and he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father, but Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead; go thou and preach the kingdom of God. These would-be followers of Jesus had very good intentions, that is like many others; they intended to follow Jesus some time, but their desires evidently were not strong enough to overcome what to them seemed like obstacles in the way. Their desires were not strong enough to put "first things first." Good intentions but weak desires. Hence, they never did become followers of Jesus.

Let us consider the excuse of the last one mentioned: "Let me first go and bury my father." It would seem that if any man had a legitimate excuse for waiting a while before he followed Jesus or worked for Him, this man surely had. Our Lord's demand to "let the dead bury their dead," seemed unsympathetic and quite discouraging. Some think that the father was not dead yet, but was getting old, and needed the young man's care, and the young man simply meant after my father dies, and is buried I will follow Thee, and preach the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the young man might have been commended for this kindness in considering his father's needs and welfare.

Then the question arises: Why did our Lord speak as He did? "Let the dead bury their dead." It surely was not because He lacked respect for the dead, or for the young man's care for his father, but it was rather, because He wanted to teach the young man,

and us, that as the caption of this article suggests, we should put first things first. Not only the unsaved, but those who profess to be followers of Jesus, are continually excusing themselves for not giving more time and strength to the cause of God, and the church, because they have so many other things to attend to: Things which are good and needful and must be done, and which are as essential perhaps in their estimation as burying a dead father. Hence, they are continually allowing the good things to become the enemies of the better and the best.

In these days when there are so many demands made on people's time, and strength to do work in promoting the best interests of the war, such as Red Cross work, etc. people find that if they respond to all the calls that come, to help in all these good things, that they have no time or very little time left to put into the cause of Christ or His church.

Notice, that our Lord did not say that the dead man should not be buried, but he said, let some one else do it: Some one who was not qualified to do his work. "Let the dead bury their dead." Now these words are very suggestive: They suggest this to me: That there are many people who are not qualified through lack of spirituality to do the work of the church, but they can do other essential things, like war work, etc. Let them do those things so that spiritually minded people can give more time to the work of God. We notice also that the apostles in the early church made a distinction between works that were strictly essential to the success of the church, works which the apostles could do, and other good works which were not so important. They said it is no reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables, etc., but look out, men, among you whom we may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

That was surely putting first things first.
H. S. DOW

VITAL GODLINESS

(Continued from Page 1)

and as an outward proof of being saved. "Faith without works is dead."

I have heard it said that we are saved by grace, plus nothing. That of course is true. But let us not forget that there is a "plus" when grace has reached our hearts. There is the "plus" of victory over sin. There is the "plus" of practical godliness. There is the "plus" of doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. It is this "plus" that God demands if we profess faith in the atoning work of Christ. Without it, our faith is vain, and the cross avails us nothing.

The great need of the hour is a return to vital godliness. Not merely to right views, right thinking and right beliefs, but a return to right living.

How is this possible? The answer of the scripture is "Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works."

The purpose of Calvary was to justify and to purify, and the outcome of this "double cure" is vital godliness.

Toronto, Canada.

Most of the trouble I ever had I never had it.—Chr. Witness.