

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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EDITORIAL

CONFLICT AND CONQUEST

The import of the resurrection of Jesus Christ may be expressed in one word—Victory. The risen Lord is the triumphant Lord. Coming forth from the tomb He bears the scars of earth's mightiest conflict and claims the spoils of history's greatest conquest.

Christ's resurrection victory was unique in its character, complete in its scope, and glorious in its provision. It was won by love unto death, bringing all opposing powers into total submission, and opening the gates of heaven to the sin-imprisoned legions of the fallen. As a result of His triumph the most powerful foe of God and good lay prostrate, the dread experience of death was robbed of its sting, and the gloom of grave was dispelled by the brightness of His glory.

In His resurrection Jesus presents confirming evidence of His claims to Deity, provides comforting grace for the hearts of His disciples, and prophesies of the complete overthrow of all forces which may presume to oppose Him in His plans for the redemption of lost men.

There is no power or authority that can stand against the risen Lord. Coming out of the rock-hewn tomb He demonstrates His control over nature and its tremendous forces. The seal of Roman authority, spoiled and broken, is evidence of His ability to humble the proud despots of military might and political decree. The keys of death and hell, securely held in the nail-scarred hand, are proof of His superiority over the realm where fallen spirits operate in obedience to their satanic leader.

The risen Lord is still victorious. The conqueror's crown has never been removed from His brow. Given undisputed sway in our hearts and unrestricted liberty in our churches, He will yet prove His supremacy in conflict with all the forces which seek the destruction of the righteous and the desolation of the temple of God.

If in personal living or group effort we are suffering defeat, we need not continue in that unhappy state. The resurrected Christ is ready to lead us on to victory. Vested with all power in heaven and in earth He extends the promise of spiritual conquest to every Christian and every church of our time. May we re-discover the ineffable glory of the risen Lord.

"AND HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER..."

John C. Cable in his Christ in the Four Gospels in introducing his discussion of Jesus' passion says: "Who prefers to write on Jesus in Gethsemane? One could with better grace speak in hushed tones at a scene so solemn! Such agony was never experienced by another. The gloom of His soul, made all the darker by the night which enveloped Him, and the sleeping disciples, can never be penetrated by the dim light of reason. So as we approach Gethsemane we shall take off our shoes and speak in subdued tones." Who can fully portray the anguish of Gethsemane? Who can adequately describe the awful sorrow of that hour? Is there mortal mind that can sufficiently grasp the meaning of His suffering, and the deep anguish of His Spirit, as He labored in such travail of soul?

The Gospels simply tell the story, and that is as it should be. It was past midnight on the last Thursday night of His life. He had finished the Last Supper with His disciples. As they had eaten together He had said that one of them would betray Him. In wonder each of the disciples had looked at Him and inquired, "Is it I?" until Judas had repeated the question and He had replied, "Thou hast said." After they had sung an hymn together they went to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus had told them that on that night all of them would be offended in Him. How strongly Peter had protested, declaring that He would never forsake the Lord! "Likewise also said all the disciples." How soon was that declaration of loyalty to be forgotten! Reaching Gethsemane, Jesus took with Him into the garden the most trusted of His disciples and "began to be sorrowful and very heavy." The woes of that experience were already beginning to show their effects upon Him and, retiring alone to the innermost depths of the garden to be alone, we have the phrase, "And he went a little farther." That distance of a "little farther" symbolizes the whole ministry of Jesus! He went farther in His ministry of teaching, in commandment, in example, in suffering, and even beyond death itself. Jesus went "a little farther" in interpreting the law to men; in throwing light upon the Old Testament; in revealing God the Father to men. But let us concern ourselves chiefly with His sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane and the sorrows of His passion.

Jesus Went Farther in His Humiliation. None of us likes to be humiliated. To have some one disregard your feelings, trample upon your rights and privileges, humble and shame you, is not a pleasant experience. It is a bitter, crucifying experience. With most of us it hurts, and it hurts deeply. Some of us are super-sensitive. We are offended and are hurt, from injustices, either fancied or real. But what of Jesus? Would you like to have your closest friends on earth desert you and deny you in your very worst moment? Would you like to have one of that number not only forsake you, but betray you openly under the pretense of devotion? Most of us detest a hypocrite, but it was a hypocrite who turned Jesus over into the hands of those who crucified Him. How insignificant, how trivial, seems the scorn and reproach of the world that we must bear, when we contrast it with the humiliation, the degradation, the awful shame that was heaped upon the Master.

Jesus Went Farther in the Agony He Suffered. Some lexicographers give the word

"agony" a two-fold meaning. 1. Extreme anguish of mind and body; 2. A death struggle. Whatever the implications of the term, Jesus understood it to its fullest depths in the literal agony of His sufferings. No man can understand fully, nor will ever know, the extreme agony which Jesus suffered. The terrible, excruciating, soul-wringing agony of those moments—so great the Father in mercy sends a mercy angel to strengthen Him lest its awful weight should cause Him to collapse! Luke writes: "And being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly," using the indefinite article to describe more perfectly the state of suffering He experienced. So great was His agony that His sweat was as blood. Moffatt translates: "He fell into an agony, and prayed with greater intensity, his sweat dropping to the ground like clots of blood." The Greek word for Jesus' sorrow here means not simply a shower of sorrow, but a deluge. Jesus was literally overwhelmed with the sorrow, the bitter agony of that hour. Jesus went farther in His suffering than ever mortal man has gone, or will ever know, even to the point that His whole body recoiled and shrank instinctively from the horror of it all.

Jesus Went Farther in Self-resignation. The battleground of the cross is found in Gethsemane. Here it was that the Master met and conquered, and finally triumphed in the cross. The battle in Gethsemane did not actually lessen the pain of Calvary, but it was here Jesus triumphed in His supplications as He faced the cross. Here the whole prospect loomed up before Him. Here His eyes were opened to its actual reality. Here He saw the cross in its ugliness, its horror, its gruesomeness and inhumanness. Matthew 26:39, "He fell on the ground and prayed," indicates how strongly the meaning of it had taken hold upon Him. Again, "he was sore amazed," which some have translated saying the meaning is that He was literally astonished at the cross, its meaning even surpassing what He had already known of it. So great was His struggle that three times He went away to pray, saying almost the same words each time: "O my Father," literally coaxing, as one has said—pleading in prayer. But Jesus in that prayer within Gethsemane's precincts gives us the highest example of self-resignation. Compare Matt. 26:39 to verse 42. In the first prayer He prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." But as He prayed the Father answered the prayer of the Son as He sometimes answers our own, by reconciling Him to the will of the Father. Until in verse 42 the change is already noticeable as He prays the second time: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." He now seems to understand the cup may not pass from Him, and prays with the greatest example of self-resignation the world has ever known. "Father, if this is Thy will, then Thy will be done! Not what I want, but what Thou wilt. This is the language of obedience. This is the language of submission. This is Paul saying, "I am crucified with Christ." This is why I believe that every Christian must have a Gethsemane, a Calvary, a resurrection. For it is by following the course our Master took that we become fashioned in His own likeness and bear His own image. Will we go a "little farther" with Him? Will we go a little farther in our humiliation, in our self-denial, in our self-resignation? "And he went a little farther."—Free Methodist.