



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."

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SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

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"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."—Phil. 4:22.

These saints were at Rome. They were of Caesar's household. They were in Christ Jesus, and saints who have their rootage in Christ can have their fruitage in Rome. Saints who are grounded in God can grow in unlikely circumstances. The world at its worst needs saints at their best. When we remember who this Caesar was, what his household must have been, we can know better the conditions. This Caesar was Nero, and without doubt the worst of all the Caesars. For once the devil seemed to get his own idea of a man incarcerated in Nero. The more we study and understand all the forces that had to do with this stand what he did, the more we understand all the forces that had to do with this man.

Nero came by it honestly. His father's name was Demetrius. His mother was a licentious, vicious woman, whose very skirts reeked with poison. This woman helped to teach her son Nero some of his most vicious thoughts and deeds. From his very youth he was given to the most violent passions. He murdered his mother, and at least two of his wives. He poisoned all of his rivals. He had Paul beheaded, and he is credited with the burning of Rome and with fiddling while it burned. He declared he would build a city worthy of his name.

Right in the midst of this, Paul says there were saints. This is Paul's answer to environment. Paul is here having us see that the forces that make sainthood are from within, and in the midst of an unholy world God produced saints that were worthy to walk with him in white, and in Caesar's household God's Gospel got its footing, and in Caesar's household there were saints worthy of the name. We must make up our minds that we can be saved so as to live anywhere. God make us to be masters of the situation and to live to contribute for him unto the coming generations.

There was nothing that would make an appeal to the men and women in Nero's day, unless they were after the real thing. To have anything to do with Christians meant to put a price on their head. Jesus Christ was crucified, Christians were put in prison. To turn Christian was a crime that meant death of the most vile kind. Once a year all the people were expected to worship the emperor, and, of course, saints did not join in this; but thus to refuse meant to put a price on their heads. Then, saints had to cast their lot with the little, despised crowd made up of slaves. They

cast in their lot with what seemed to be the very off-scouring of the earth in that time, but in the face of this there were men and women who put their feet in the red road that led to martyrdom, and gave their very lives to bring forth the seeds that are bearing fruit today. They deliberately put their hands in their pockets, and never looked back.

In Nero's day, the saints had to live in the very graveyard of pagan greatness. Everything else had failed. Rome, with its military power, was rotten to the core. Greece, with its philosophers, had failed, and the saints had to breathe the tainted air of this environment, of everything that had failed, but there were saints, and they come out and salute you, that you may not grow discouraged in your present environment.

The saints in Caesar's day had to live in the midst of universal slavery. There never was such a system of slavery in all the world's history as existed in that day. Sixty million of all the inhabitants of Rome were slaves. They had no rights, no privileges. They could not contract a legal matter; they could have no inheritance; they could claim no rights; they could not be heard in any explanations; they were forced to work without remuneration; but in the midst of slavery there were men and women who had received a proclamation of freedom, not from human hands—they were free in God, and walked as sons and daughters before him. Right in the midst of the time when the world was at its worst, and chaos marked everything, there were saints. There never is a time when the world so needs God as at such times, and these saints that Paul writes about salute you, lest you think you have a difficult time in California.

In Caesar's day it was an age of gluttony. In each age there is some vicious form of sin manifested as outstanding. The outstanding sin of Nero's day was that of gluttony, drunkenness, lust in its worst form, and in the midst of all this there were saints that walked the highway of life; saints whose garments were never smirched. They were saints who had come in contact with God. God produced saints in Caesar's household. We must produce a dynamic sainthood today. We are in danger of upholstering the cross and making it look like a piece of overstuffed furniture.

In Caesar's day there was blood, and agony, and death, and sacrifice that made saints conquer the world. They come out and salute you, lest you hunt an easy place.

In Caesar's day it was the day of degraded womanhood. There was a time in Rome that womanhood was really honored, but that day was past, and they were in a day of degrada-

tion of women, but in the midst God produced saints. There were women worthy of the name, Saint in Caesar's household. Those were the days when Christianity achieved, when Christianity succeeded in battering down the walls of Rome, in conquering Rome. It is the sufferings of Christianity that has conquered. The reason why our results are so meager, that we invest so much and get so small returns, is because our "Rome" is not red enough. Perhaps if we did not have so easy a time we would have better results. Not only an easy time in money affairs, but an easy time in prayer. We do not sweat and agonize. It takes effort to have results.

In Caesar's day the world was brutalized in its pleasures. The pleasures of Caesar's day were to watch the gladiators in the arena, Roman races, theatres, and public baths. When the gladiators walked into the arena their greeting was, as they faced the emperor, "We who are about to die salute the emperor." When the arena ran with life blood, ladies would wave their handkerchiefs. The theatres were too awful to describe. In the midst of all this there were saints, saints who did not go the way of least resistance, but who walked alone with God, and these saints salute us in the twentieth century lest we become soft.

The saints in Caesar's day witnessed the most hellish forms of cruelty that the ingenuity of the mind could conceive. One of the punishments meted out to the Christians, an indoor sport, was to throw them alive to the lions; another form was to daub their bodies with pitch and light them that they might be torches for Nero's garden parties; still another form of punishment was to dress them in the skins of wild beasts, starve the lions, then put the Christians out into the arena where the starved lions could smell their skins and tear their victims to pieces. And these saints salute you: They did not draw back; they did not play to the galleries; they asked for no quarter and they received none.

Paul mentions the conditions thus: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments." They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. And these saints salute you. They produced a high type of sainthood in the first century and unfurled the white banner of righteousness before the ramparts of hell. What was it that produced such saints? The schools of learning? Literature? What was it? Emphasis was being put on secular things. What was it that mas-

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