



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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THE OVERCOMING FAITH

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Part of a message given to the Fellowship group of the West Somerville Nazarene Church:

Text: John XVII, "Father, I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

Jesus was no ascetic. True Christianity is a fighting and a triumphing faith. Even Judaism, which was the forerunner of the glorious Gospel, was all that. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is keyed to the note of victory. From Abel down to the last of the martyrs of that old dispensation we have the record of those who were in the world but refused to be swallowed up by the world. A living faith in a great living God made them different in their attitude towards wealth and honor that men give, and all the pride and vainglory of life. What a spiritual tonic that chapter is to us, who today see against us many odds from the outward viewpoint.

That spirit put Daniel in the lions' den, but the lions had no appetite for a man saturated with a living faith; that spirit enabled Joseph to resist the wanton advances of a beautiful woman, when all the circumstances might have given him an excuse for following the way of licentiousness, so common in that land; it brought down upon him seeming retribution for daring to do the right, that landed him in prison, under the condemnation of the man who was his benefactor. But God brought him out, and I believe that Joseph expected nothing else. All that time there was something whispering in his soul, "fear not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God."

God brought Joseph out and those dark experiences were but the preparation for the great place God had for him. His victory over that awful temptation was wonderful, but to me Joseph's maintenance of integrity, humility and absolute devotion to God in the midst of his prosperity, when he was lifted from the prisoner's cell to the second place in the kingdom, is still more wonderful. It proves that back in that day of limited light and low standards, God could give grace sufficient to keep one in this world uncontaminated by the evil that surges round.

With the life, death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus, culminating in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus said was for us as well as for those of apostolic days, we need not run away from the world, and try to isolate ourselves from the practical concerns of life. God can give us a faith that can stand the

rough and tumble that life inevitably brings. He said "Ye are the light of the world," and he compared us to a candle set not under a bushel, but out where it can shine. And he must have felt that our light can be so strong that not a breath nor even the unfriendly gusts of worldly wind can blow it out. All they had then were candles and lamps; what shall we say of the 150 watt electric bulbs we have today!

What an encouragement Jesus gave to those disciples when he said, after having enumerated the many things they might expect from the world, "Fear not I have overcome the world;" Yes, he said "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves". What an unequal battle of sheep against wolves! There is where Jesus was sending them, and He was sending them alone, for he was going away. What a failure His entire ministry seemed to have been. He had poured out his life in loving benefactions upon the poor, sick and suffering, but here He had gained only a little band of weak followers—yea, so weak that Jesus could scarcely turn his back when they would be in a scrap as to whom should be the greatest in what they thought was to be a temporal kingdom.

But all of Christ's hope was centered in them. In that high priestly prayer, he tells His Father all about it. He praises His apostles for sticking to Him. Only the son of perdition has been lost. Jesus reaches the climax of His prayer when He prays that His apostles should be in the world and kept from its evil.

What we need today is the spirit that pervades the eleventh of Hebrews, and the spirit Jesus, in the power and presence that the Holy Ghost can give us, who live in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation among whom we are to shine as lights. So my theme is "In the world and yet not of the world". Not enslaved by it; finding in the world at the only true arena for the development of our faith, and the only place where we can become a saving element—the salt of the earth.

1st: There is the political world that Jesus did not condemn nor ignore. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," silenced the subtle Pharisees who wanted to convict him of treason.

Nero was emperor when Paul preached and signed Paul's death decree, yet Paul came out with the most wonderful exhortation to the Christians all "to be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God and the powers that be are ordained of God; he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive condemnation."

Government was bad then, unspeakably bad. There was no politics then. It was a dictator who ruled with absolute sway. There was no such thing as the voice of the people being heard in a popular vote. We are in a millenium today in comparison with those days. The privilege to vote is a high and God-given privilege; it is the bed-rock of our democracy. And elections are run on a much cleaner and forthright plan than they were even in my boyhood days, when the polling place could be crowded with smoking, drinking men, and political henchmen could lead men up to a polling booth, give them two dollars and have them vote as the henchman desired. Oh those good old days of drunkenness and fighting and carousing and corruption.

But some will say "politics is too rotten for me today: I don't vote." Then you ought to be sent to Russia where no one truly votes but the leaders. Thank God for the great and good men who have been in the political battle. Gladstone was a man wonderful in his power of oratory and political vision. But he was so humble in his spirit that when the little crossing-sweeper, who kept the walk clean over which the great statesmen passed was missing one day, Mr. Gladstone found that he was very sick. He could leave the affairs of a great empire for a little, and seek out that lad. He had to climb a rude stairway, and in a humble room found the boy. He smiled upon him, gave him more than he could have earned at his usual job, and then knelt in prayer.

Yes, governments may be more or less corrupt, and they are more accordingly as what to us, is the wrong party in power. But we could not get along without government, and it is for godly men to make their influence felt. Pat was directed to look up at an airplane far up in the sky, and one asked, "Pat, how would you like to be up there with that?" Pat replied, "I would rather be up there with it than without it." If you or I were placed in great positions of trust would we do any better than leaders do today?

Paul exhorted the Christians of his day to pray for kings and rulers. When do we hear of kings and premiers and governors being prayed for today in holiness camp meetings and holiness churches? You believe the N. T.: there you have the authority.

But to get red-hot in politics will mean to lose all the real spiritual fervor and enjoyment we may once have had. But when I as an old man, am willing to take something from the state for my support, which takes off my diminishing strength the battle for bread, I am not going to be too hard on political lead-

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