

SEPTEMBER 30TH 1950

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

Moses D Hillman, Jan. 50

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1950

No. 258

FROM AND FOR THE PREACHER

By Rev. J. C. Black

"I remember one time beginning a meeting in an old conservative church in one of the most conservative towns in the South. A large crowd had gathered to hear my first sermon. It was not much of a sermon they heard, but a good deal of proposition making. To begin with I asked all fathers present who had unsaved sons to stand up. Nobody stood, however, except a small boy about 12 years of age who sat far back in the congregation. He arose, but he was not satisfied to stand; he got upon the seat and lifted his hands. He was determined to be seen. Everybody laughed at the mistake and I said, 'Young man, that will do: sit down.' My next proposition was to mothers, but not a mother stood. The same little boy got up, however. 'That will do,' said I, 'sit down.' Then I went for the brothers and sisters. I made five propositions that night and this boy responded to every one of them, indeed he was the only person who paid any attention to them whatever, and I went away from that meeting very much humiliated.

The next evening I ran the same proposition and to every proposition the same little fellow responded. The same was true in the night service and on through all the services of three days. To every proposition I made he responded and he was the only one who did. Finally a deacon of the church came to me and said, 'Brother you seem to be having a dull time.' 'No dull time about it deacon,' I said, 'I never saw a much livelier time than we are having'.

'Yes, but we are not having any meeting.' 'Meeting,' said I, 'what do you mean by a meeting? Did you ever see more people trying to get into a church in this town than we are having?'

'No,' said he, 'but folks don't make a meeting.'

'But I am sure benches don't, said I.

'No,' said he, 'but there is no spirit in the meeting.'

'Well,' I said, 'that may be true. I think it is true but what have you to say about it?'

'Why,' said he, 'I can tell you what is the matter. You know that little boy that keeps popping up and down?'

'O yes, I know him. He is about the only soul in the town I do know.'

'Well,' he said, 'that is the trouble. That boy is a half idiot; in fact he is almost whole idiot, and the people come here to see him perform. That is what they are coming for.'

'Well what do you think I should do about it?'

'Why,' he replied, stop him of course.'

'Stop him!' I said, never! he is about the

only sign of life I have seen in this town. I feel like paying him to go around with me to worry old conservative deacons. Talk about that boy. Why he is the only spark of hope the church has in this town so far as I have been able to see! I would not think of putting that light out.'

'Well he has thrown a damper on your meeting.'

No, Brother, he has not,' I said, 'you cannot put a damper on an icehouse and this old thing has been frozen over for twenty years.'

'All right,' he said, 'let the boy go on.'

So the boy went on for the rest of the week. Now and then he would be joined by some other simple soul who would stand for prayer, but not very often. On Sunday morning the pastor had to go to the country to preach a funeral sermon and he left me to receive members into the church. Just before I went into the pulpit on Sunday morning the officers of the church came to me again and said, 'Brother, we understand you are going to open the doors of the church this morning.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'the pastor has asked me to do so.'

'Well, we have just been talking about it, and since there is no one, as far as we know to join the church, we have decided to ask you to leave that out of the programme and take up the time preaching.'

I looked at the brother who said that and said, 'Brother, are you telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean just what I say.'

'Explain yourself,' he said.

'Don't you know there is some one to join the church this morning? You know that if I open the doors of the church that little boy, that idiot who is giving you men so much trouble, will present himself for membership. Is not that the reason you do not want me to open the doors of the church?'

They bowed their heads for a moment and said, 'Yes, it is; that child does not know enough to join the church, but his people are good people, and we do not want to make them mad by refusing him.'

'Well brethren, I admit this is an interesting case. If I know anything about it, this church has had the devil in it for 20 years and I have never heard of you making any ado about that. Now a little simple, half-idiot child that cannot do anybody any harm wants to join the church and you are scared out of your wits.'

At the close of the sermon I gave the invitation and the little fellow came. I knew he would. I asked the usual questions and took the vote and he was received.

That night in the meeting a man arose and said, 'Brother, I want to ask prayer for a man

who is in this house, one of the most honored citizens of our town, a man eighty-five years of age who has not been in a church for twenty-five years until tonight. He has been known as a skeptic, but I see him here tonight and I think he will pardon me for making this request. I feel so deeply the weight of his soul.'

As soon as he sat down the old man arose and said, 'Friends and neighbors I am the man you are about to pray for and I want to tell you why I am here tonight. This little boy who sits by my side is my grandson. You know that he is an unfortunate lad. It is because of that we have loved him so. This morning he came home and threw his arms around me and said, "O grandpa, I have got religion and joined the church and I am so happy I don't know what to do. O I wish grandma was here. O grandpa you know she died three months ago and went to heaven and I have nobody now to talk to me about Jesus". The old man continued his story. 'As that boy said that, something struck my heart that had not struck it since I was a boy and left home to go to college. You may call it what you please, but if you can by your prayers bring the grace of God into my heart, I will be thankful.' Before we left the church that night he was converted.

The next morning the little fellow went out in the town and climbed over his father's bar counter and said, 'Papa won't you come with me to hear our preacher?' The father promised he would and did that night and about two o'clock in the morning was converted. The next day he declared he was going to be a missionary to his fellow saloon keepers. He got every one of them to close up their places of business and come to church. They were seven in number and during the week six out of the seven were converted. A great revival broke out in that town and spread throughout the country. Every bar-keeper agreed to quit business and in six months there was not a bar-room in that county. A glorious revival of religion! And how did it come about? Not by great preaching, nor by great manipulation, nor by great singing—valuable as these things all may be. It came about through a little half-idiot boy who had no better sense than to trust God the best he knew and to do his level best."

"Is the world better or worse where I tread?

What have I done in the years that are dead?

What have I left in the way as I passed—
Foilables to perish or blessings to last?"

He who is willing to take the lowliest place will never be crowded for room, so if you would be comfortable seek for the humble place.—The Holiness Era.