

# THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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## EDITORIAL

### "FIRST OF ALL PRAYERS"

"Prayer is not a last resort, but a **first resource.**" That statement seen outside of a church reminded me of Paul's words to Timothy, "I exhort therefore, that, **first of all**, prayers, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." It is true that the American Standard Version reads, "I exhort, therefore, first of all," thus making the "first of all" to refer to the exhortation, yet since the appeal for prayer is first in Paul's list of exhortations, the demand is still that prayer be given first place.

Prayer, then, is not something to be added at the end. It is the thing with which to begin. "First of all, prayers." Let that practice be applied to all matters pertaining to our lives and labours and what mistakes would be avoided, what benefits would be gained, and what success would attend our efforts.

When Paul made his appeal, his concern was for the salvation of men's souls and the blessing of their lives. Thus he wrote of God's saving purpose concerning them, and of His provision through the "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." He also referred to his own responsibility as a preacher and teacher. But in his words, "first of all, prayers," he showed the importance and the place of prayer in all man's efforts to bless men.

This is hardly an enlightening word to any of us. Our need is not light but practice. We need to put prayer "first of all." Of God's saving purpose and provision, and of the importance of preaching and teaching we are sure. Man greatly needs the first, and God has chosen to use the second, but for the effectual working of both in the saving of men, prayer is basic. "First of all, prayers," is God's order as well as Paul's. Let us make and keep it ours.—E. W. T.

"What is the reason many thousands of Christian workers in the world have not greater influence? Nothing save this—the prayerlessness of their service. In the midst of all their zeal in the study and in the work of the Church, of all their faithfulness in preaching and conversation with the people, they lack that ceaseless prayer which has attached to it the sure promise of the Spirit, and the power from on high. It is nothing but the sin of prayerlessness which is the cause of the lack of a powerful spiritual life . . . The indis-

sensible thing is not preaching, not pastoral visitation, not church work, but fellowship with God in prayer until we are clothed with power from on high!"—Andrew Murray.

### WHEN RESPONSIBILITY CLOSES IN

(Continued from Page 1)

it: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more (this is our liberty); but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (This is the limitation that we are willing—and obligated—to place on our liberty). "Make up your mind never to put any stumbling block or hindrance in your brother's way," is the simpler, terser form in which Moffat renders it.

It often looks as if we Christians of today, in our emphasis upon being broad and exercising freedom, have forgotten that part of our responsibility. We have neglected that element in the training and sensitizing of our Christian conscience. Take that into account, my friends, and see what it does to your practice of smoking, your so-called moderate drinking, your theater going, your card playing, your careless observance of the Lord's Day, and the like. You see it is so much easier to plead for liberty than it is to shoulder responsibility.

If it be objected that now the preacher has come down to the level of negative talk and trifling issues, then he can only answer that St. Paul made the same descent when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. When these matters need to be handled, as they sometimes do, then certainly we should know what Christian principles are involved. Certainly we should be more interested in a cultivated than a callous conscience. For in the end "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

We pass now to think about another direction in which this truth of personal accountability expresses itself. It is just this: each of us is personally responsible for a careful and constructive use of his opportunities. Listen again to the Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostle Paul. It is a passage which somewhat parallels the one out of which our text is taken: "For we must all appear before Christ's judgment seat in our true light, in order that each may receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing then what the fear of the Lord means, we endeavor to win men" (II. Cor. 5:10-11. Weymouth.)

My fellow Christians, do we realize that when we stand before the searching eyes of Jesus Christ, He is not going to ask us what church we joined, or by what mode we were baptized, or whether we accepted the Augsburg or the Westminster Confession, or a dozen other things that we often argue about. Do we realize that He is going to ask us, His disciples, what we did with that commission of His: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"? He is going to ask us what we did to win our children, and our friends, and our associates to a new life in Christ. He is going to ask us what we did with our opportunities to challenge people with the question of their personal relationship to the Redeemer who died for them.

And what are we doing to answer? We who can "talk shop" so constantly, and the war so informatively, and politics so avidly and the weather so casually, but who are strangely silent on matters that would prick a man's

spiritual indifference and set him thinking about his soul! We who say we believe that the main business of Christ's church is to mediate the miracle of the new birth in the lives of men, but who rarely, if ever, invite some one to accompany us to the place where the renewing gospel of the grace of God will be preached! We who have money to spend for everything else, but who either pass up the offering for foreign missions or else dole out a sum so paltry that it wouldn't equal one week's spending on the movies! What, I ask you, what, in the name of that bleeding Savior on the Cross, are we going to answer?

Responsibility closes in. Our evasions will not do. They are hurtful to others and damaging to ourselves. For a conscience that is alive and sensitive to all the unveiled meanings of the mind of Christ—for that I am myself responsible. For a consecrated service that makes the winning of others to Christ its chief and changeless goal, a service that will not knowingly pass up its opportunities for reaching this goal—for that, too, I bear a responsibility that cannot be escaped.

"Therefore, O Lord, I will not fail nor falter,  
Nay, but I ask it, nay, but I desire,  
Lay on my lips Thine embers of the altar,  
Seal with the sting and furnish with the fire.

"Give me a voice, a cry, and a complaining—  
Oh! let my sound be stormy in their ears!  
Throat that would shout but cannot stay for  
straining,  
Eyes that would weep but cannot stay for  
tears.

"Quick in a moment, infinite for ever,  
Send an arousal better than I pray,  
Give me a grace upon the faint endeavor,  
Souls for my hire and Pentecost today."  
—From Heart and Life

"Let those who will, back down, compromise, condemn the good old methods, and try to seek out some more popular way, if they choose, but we have the truth. We have the Lord Jesus. We have the Holy Bible. We have the Holy Spirit sanctifying and witnessing. We have full salvation for the present and heaven for all eternity. Let those who will, ridicule and find fault, but let the holiness people keep steady on their way without fear or compromise for one moment. God is with us. This does not mean for a moment that we shall separate ourselves from our brethren, but unneighborly, boastful, or self-righteous; but it does mean we shall be uncompromising, unswerving, and fearless in testifying to the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a second, distinct work of grace, purifying our hearts."—H. C. Morrison.

### PRAYER

Prayer is so simple,  
It is like quietly opening a door  
And slipping into the very presence of God,  
There in the stillness  
To listen for His voice.  
Perhaps in petition,  
Or only to listen,  
It matters not;  
Just to be there,  
In His presence,  
Is prayer.—Selected.