



# The King's Highway

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## Excited About Religion

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"His friends said, He is beside himself" (Mark 3:21).

We live in an age when almost everyone is excited about something, but you have to use a microscope to find someone who is excited about God and His Church and righteousness. Not so long ago the men folk in our community were very much excited about the squirrel season. They would go out and tramp in the cold, damp woods long before daybreak and walk several miles for one (or none) tiny squirrel. But when Sunday morning came—well, it was just too early to get out to Sunday school and church. Then came the bird season. Many a man walked a hundred miles and did not so much as see a bird. And then came the elaborate deer season when men went wild about hunting—forgot their families, their jobs, walked thousands of miles, and slept in the frost and snow and sometimes froze fingers or toes.

Now, there is nothing wrong with hunting, but I just want you to get a picture of a world that has gone mad for the material. We claim to be a people who believe the seen to be temporary and the unseen eternal, but our actions do not square with our professed beliefs. No doubt about it, the thought of the masses is directed toward the material.

Christ warned the church at Ephesus about this very thing: "You have lost your first love, your urgency, your fervency," He said. Later Paul in writing to Ephesus said, "Be not drunk with wine (wine of the material world) . . . but be filled with the Spirit." The world is drunk. Those who do not drink intoxicants are drunk on something else. How the Church needs more God-intoxicated men and women; men and women who are beside themselves, whose zeal has carried them out of themselves! Christ referred to this as losing your life and finding it.

I believe that the reason more of us are not God-intoxicated is that we have only a skin-deep religion, and our knowledge of the will of God is dim. A lack of heartfelt salvation makes religion insipid, and a lack of the Spirit of God in our lives makes us powerless and ineffective. When a man has actually been made participator in the suffering of Christ and has a keen-edged hope of sharing His resurrection, he will certainly not throw himself away on the rubbish pile of materialism and secularism. He will have time for God's work. It will not be scraps and leftovers he gives to God. Men possessed by an urgent spirit of our

Lord are eager to fling themselves headlong into the service of God. They are ready to burn the bridges behind them and go on.

In world affairs the voice of the church is desperately weak, and even in our own communities, for fear of being considered queer or fanatical, we speak only in a whisper about God. It is easiest just to go along with everything and anything than to run counter to the massive spirit of materialism that shadows us all. We have about decided that nothing is worth fighting for. That is what happened to old Rome. That same spirit has festered in the heart of France, and that cankerous spirit is growing by leaps and bounds in the Christian church in America today. Every nation and every civilization that has fallen has died of the same disease—materialism. God was forgotten, and the god of things took the saddle seat.

The Protestant church was born in the midst of fires of persecution. Those early churchmen gloried in crosses and hardships. They preached a blood-red gospel; theirs was a message that saved to the uttermost. How does our generation harmonize with that of the first-century Christians?

It was said of Columbus, "The instinct of another continent burned in his soul." I can imagine that Columbus often stood on the shore watching the waves beating against the shore line. His heart finally cried out, "Oh, if only I knew what lies beyond that ocean!" That burning instinct in his heart became white hot, and he headed his little ship into the face of those boisterous waves. Now, that instinct of another country, a heavenly country, must burn in the heart of God's people. Unless it does, we are a saltless society, a world without light.

The Bible is punctured with this very theme of spiritual urgency. Abraham, the father of faith, had this spirit. Daniel chose the lions' den in preference to the king's palace in order that he might keep fellowship with God. The Hebrew children chose the fiery furnace rather than bow to a god of things. These men were fired with the instinct of a better country. There was a light in their souls that refused to go out. They were called nomads, strangers in a foreign land, pilgrims. The inspired apostle says, "Set your affections on things above." And Jesus said, "Lay up wealth for yourselves in heaven, where neither the moth nor wear and tear destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

We are not urged much today to be enthusiastic about the things of God. Moonlight messages and powder-puff preaching are the order of the day. We are told to relax, be still,

## Passion For Souls

The Editor of The Watchman-Examiner tells of being approached once by a young man with the statement that he wanted to enter the ministry. Upon inquiry, it was learned that he took no interest in souls, either in the Sunday School and Young People's meetings or in the Sunday evening evangelistic services. He was a student and felt that the ministry would afford him an opportunity for the use and development of his talents.

By contrast the Editor tells of the compulsion of service that came upon Charles Spurgeon with resistless power when he was converted, which Mr. Spurgeon himself describes in these words:

"Though I could not preach, and never thought I should be able to testify to the multitude, I used to write texts on little scraps of paper, and drop them anywhere, that some poor creatures might pick them up and receive them as messengers of mercy to their souls. I could scarcely content myself for five minutes without trying to do something for Christ. If I walked along the street, I must have a few tracts with me; if I went into a railway carriage, I must drop a tract out of the window; if I had a moment's leisure, I must be on my knees or at my Bible; if I were in company, I must turn the conversation to Christ that I might serve my Master."—The Alliance Weekly.

be quiet, be calm and composed; don't get excited. But some folk have relaxed so long that they are fast asleep—and some are dead. This "relaxing" religion comes from the pagan philosophy that is bidding for a front seat in Christendom.

For example, look at the statue of Buddha, hands folded, eyes closed, great pouch of a well-fed stomach, fat, contented, asleep. Who wants a religion like that? Look at Jesus Christ who was accused of being beside himself. Think of him on the cross, nails in his feet and hands. Or behold him praying and sweating great drops of blood. See him with thorns on his brow and blood streaming down his face. This is not "relaxing," not ease, not a sleepy religion. I think of Jesus keenly alive, every nerve, fiber, and muscle vibrating with urgency. His message was, "I must . . . I ought." It takes no grace, no love, no urgency to relax and sleep and live as though we would be here on earth for a thousand years, and it certainly takes no religion to live that kind of life.

God help us to get "beside ourselves" and be like our Master!—Gospel Trumpet.