



The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., AUGUST 31, 1953

No. 325

Christian Convictions

By Evang. Warren C. McIntire

Our dear Saviour is a great character builder. His redeeming grace is designed for that purpose. Christian experience is a divine process in character building. The best character known among men is that built by and through a saving relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian character is the superlative achievement of redemption: men and women built into the moral and spiritual likeness of the Son of God.

Convictions are of first importance in the building of Christian character. They are like the hidden steel frame of a modern building: they give shape and strength to character. Christian convictions hold the structure of Christian character together, keep it from being torn apart in wreckage when the stress and strain of temptation and life's unpleasant experiences break as a storm over the soul. A conviction is a strong persuasion involving a feeling of certainty and an attitude of moral resolution. Christian convictions are produced by the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit: grow out of his use by the Word, of the good example of godly people, of the testimony and writings of people who have been taught by divine inspiration, the deep things of God. For the building of Christian character, one must have clear cut convictions on questions of principle and conduct, sin and righteousness.

Touching the matter of convictions there are four classes of people. The way they co-operate with the Holy Spirit, as He seeks to build their character, determines whether they survive or perish spiritually.

1. Those who never have had clear cut, well defined convictions. There are easy going souls. They have a knowledge of what is right and wrong, but they do not take life seriously. They hear the truth spoken, or read it in a written message, but they pay slight heed to it, do not apply it to themselves. They lack moral vigor to co-operate with the Holy Spirit as He would transmit knowledge into improved conduct and character. They drift along lazily. They lack definite intention, strong resolution, settled purpose, moral vigor. These people are easily led off doctrinally and ethically. They furnish a large proportion of our backsliders. Such souls are to be pitied more than censured. There is little hope of their making it through to heaven unless some strong moral shock arouses them to a realization of their danger.

2. Those who at one time had strong convictions on such matters as worldly amusements, modest dress, Sabbath observance, rev-

erence for God's house, tithing, divorce, pure-mindedness, chaste conversation; but by neglecting the means of grace, or associating with those who are unspiritual they have leaked out and toned down to escape the reproach of godliness and become backsliders. For the sake of domestic peace, social approval, place, preferment, or love of financial gain, they have modified their convictions: they have pleased men at the cost of displeasing God. Poor backsliders, they have gone back into spiritual darkness. Only a relatively small number of these are ever recovered for few of them will pay the price to stay true to God. What a pity! They started well, but failed to co-operate with the Holy Spirit as he sought to build and maintain strong convictions in their moral makeup, make them strong Christian characters.

3. Those who have held onto their convictions, but have become harsh, hard and driving; gone to extremes beyond all reason or scriptural requirements of godliness. They are modern Pharisees in that they are sticklers for the letter of holiness, but have lost the spirit of holiness. They have become self-appointed judges in Israel; they bind heavy burdens of restrictions on others; they are austere and frequently swing the lash of condemnation; there is little of love, mercy or kindness about them. They do God and the cause of holiness much harm. This class furnishes many recruits to those cults which ride peculiar and extreme hobbies, or rally to those leaders who set up ultra-radical standards and preach a gospel of harsh sour holiness. What a tragedy! Only an occasional one of these are ever recovered and brought back into a mood where they will be teachable and responsive to the Holy Spirit as he seeks to build them into wholesome Christian characters.

4. Those who have sound, sensible Bible-founded, God-pleasing convictions. People who hold their convictions unswervingly, but keep sweet under opposition and persecution. They maintain a godly walk, a brotherly attitude, a patient and teachable spirit. They beget confidence by the purity of their lives. Co-operating with the Holy Spirit, He is able to build them into beautiful Christian characters, the superlative achievement of the redeeming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not enough to have convictions. Let us be sure that our convictions are such as please God. Then let us hold them with a right-spirit and attitude. Above all, let us live them out to the glory of our Christ and the blessing of those over whom we may exert some influence that will lead the lost to Christ.—Pilgrim Holiness Advocate.

Prayer—

Its Practice and Results

G. W. Ridout

How barren is the prayer life! How little time is spent with God. Is it any wonder there is an absence of spiritual vision and liberty and power? Too many people try to bolster up their prayer by reading books on prayer. It is a great mistake. The best book to teach you to pray is the Bible.

The devout Fenelon said, "In God's name I beseech you, let prayer nourish your soul as meals nourish your body." Said Henry Martyn, that saint of God, "Devoted too much time and attention to outward and public duties of the ministry. I attribute my present deadness to want of sufficient time and tranquility for private devotion. Oh, that I might be a man of prayer!"

Prayer is a mighty force but a most unused, neglected power. It is melancholy to think how many preachers, leaders and church workers have the lowest minimum of prayer life—they manage to make out with such little prayer. Lots of people read stacks of books on prayer but they amount to little in producing prayer. I have read many books on prayer which have had great effect on my thinking, but I have long since come to the conclusion that to learn how to pray is to pray—get down to business, shut the door, get alone with God and there talk things over with Him. Maybe your hymn book and Bible close by will help you to feed the flames of prayer.

"My creed," said Gilmour, that great missionary, "leads me to think that prayer is efficacious; and surely a day's asking God to overrule all events for good is not lost; still there is a great feeling that when a man is praying he is doing nothing, and this feeling makes us give undue importance to work, sometimes even to the hurrying over or even to the neglect of prayer. Do we not rest too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old?"

Martin Luther, being asked about his plans for the following day, said, "Work, work from early till late! In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

Three hours in prayer! Many spend three minutes only. Luther and those men of old moved things for God because they moved God by their prayers. No one can get very far in real work for God unless more time is spent with God in prayer.

Melanchthon said of Luther: "Once I heard
(Continued on Page 5)