

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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EDITORIALS

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

"A man who is undisturbed by the problem of pain is suffering from one of two things; hardening of the heart, or softening of the brain", states a well-known writer.

We live in a world of suffering and sorrow, tragedy and heartbreak. It has been the state of things through the long centuries of human history. Death and disaster have played havoc with the people of every generation, and we certainly come in for our share in this twentieth century. In fact, the tempo of living in this jet-propelled age, rather than hastening us beyond the reach of calamity, seems to hurl us into its path. Disease and accidents claim victims at an alarming rate, and institutions established to care for the sick and suffering are overcrowded. Cries of anguish from those who languish under the torments of cruel maladies, or lay prostrate and broken as a result of sudden catastrophe, mingle with the sobs of those who bemoan the misfortunes and the loss of loved ones. The world seems crowded with scenes which move the heart and trouble the mind. We are inclined to utter the complaint of the afflicted man of long ago: "...man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

The disturbing, and sometimes perplexing question we face is this: "Why does God, in His governing providence over the affairs of men, allow so much of heartache and heartbreak?" As we stand by the bed of the sufferer we ask ourselves, "why does it happen, and why does it continue?" News of tragic accidents, strewn the highway with bruised and broken victims, brings the ugly question mark back again. An innocent child is struck down with a fatal blow, while a suffering grandmother, longing for death, lingers on. A beloved mother is snatched by death from the embrace of her children, while one who seems worse than useless continues to burden society. Why? Well, we have to face the fact that much of the world's suffering is due to a disregard for God's laws and His revealed will. Not all of it, by any means, but much of it. Failing to heed the warning "the soul that sinneth, it shall die", and deluded by the satanic promise "ye shall not surely die", we break God's laws, and are in turn broken by them. After centuries of costly experi-

ment, men still make the fatal mistake of playing with sin, and, failing to heed the counsel of wisdom and love divine, suffer the sad consequences of deliberate disobedience. Much of our suffering and heartbreak is of our own making. We sow the wind, and we reap the whirlwind; we insist on throwing off the restraint of God's Word and will, and rush headlong toward disaster. Men and nations would escape so much of sore affliction if they would but order their affairs according to the plan and purpose of God.

Again, God sometimes allows trouble and affliction to come to us in order to turn our attention away from things material and toward things spiritual. When the goodness of God fails to bring us to repentance, divine wisdom sometimes orders sterner measures. Where mercy goes unheeded, judgment sometimes brings response. "Before I was afflicted", said the Psalmist, "I went astray." And the prophet Isaiah declared: "When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." Sickness and trouble have led many people to call upon God and seek His will, who, lacking these hardships, had continued to the end of life in worldly and sinful pursuits. So earthly loss has brought heavenly gain, and that which seemed like stark tragedy, has been blessing in disguise.

But then, pain and calamity come to the righteous and the godly. And this is the point at which the problem of pain is most difficult. Why do good people suffer? Why does tragedy come to those who seek with all sincerity to serve and honour God? That the sinner must suffer is a law of life. And if hardship results in our seeking salvation, we may bless God that it came. But why do the righteous writhe in pain, why is calamity allowed to strike God's own people?

To consider one answer only: We are sometimes allowed to suffer in order that we may be refined and may glorify God in the fires. Job perceived this, and cried out: "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold". Paul made this discovery and declared: "...most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." And to some of you who read these lines has come the holy privilege "not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake". May grace abundant be given you!

The problem of pain will disturb us so long as we are in this world. It is but one of the disastrous effects of the fall. Two precious promises may cheer the heart of the suffered; one for this life, "my grace is sufficient for thee," and one of the life to come: "...there shall be no more pain".

GIVING

Giving is an essential part of the Christian religion. . . . The system of redemption is, from first to last, one prodigious process of gift. . . . Every man on whose spirit the true light of redemption breaks, finds himself heir to a heritage of givings, which began on the eve of time, and will keep pace with the course of eternity. To giving he owes his all; in giving he sees the most substantial evidence he can offer, that he is a grateful debtor; and the self-sacrifice of Him in Whom he trusts says, far more pathetically than words can say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."—William Arthur.

The great use of a life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.—William James.

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