

# The King's Highway

## AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXVIII

MONCTON, N. B., MARCH 14TH, 1959

No. 457

### ----- The Challenge of the Cross -----

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The "preaching of the cross" is an invitation to the unconverted. To the converted, it is a challenge! We need to spend more time "beneath the cross of Jesus." To live in the atmosphere of the cross will put spiritual health into one's being, "fire" into the soul!

#### A CHALLENGE TO DIE

When Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, . . . and follow me," He had just spoken of His coming death, and He gives the invitation for men to follow Him to the death of the cross. Professing Christians are too much "alive" today. They "count their lives dear unto themselves." Self-denial is a rare experience. We are taught to believe that only "the easy" and "the pleasant" are right. Modern advertising has given us an "ease complex," to the point where we feel that anything involving effort, inconvenience, and unpleasantness are wrong! May we linger around the cross until we are ashamed of our "soft little ways"—our "flowery beds of ease"!

If we would truly be "crucified with Christ," "self" would cease to be on the throne. This hour demands men "dead to self" and "alive unto God"! Open the Bible, meditate on the cross—meditate until we are challenged to die! Only then will we begin to live!

#### A CHALLENGE TO PURPOSE

The reader of the Scriptures in studying the life of Jesus soon realizes that His whole life focused upon the cross. For "this hour" He came into the world. Everything else was incidental. He was born to die. He came "to give his life a ransom," "to lay down his life for his sheep." His mind was girded to one purpose only!

Let us consider our pointless and "scattered" minds, with their loose ends flailing about! Our minds are pressured and pulled by "a thousand things"! No wonder Peter exhorts us "to gird up the loins" of our minds! Paul said, "This one thing I do." A blunt nail is hard to drive. Let us be pointed! Let us, at the cross, get the true perspective. As Jesus had this one event ever before Him, so His own people need to spend time contemplating the cross. As Martha, we are "cumbered about with many things." As Mary, we need to "choose the better part, which shall not be taken away from (us)." "Planned neglect" is the need of the hour! There is a need to neglect the "secondary" for the "primary"! We are majoring in minors! There needs to be a self-pruning for more fruitfulness!

A missionary told of orders to evacuate all American citizens from Seoul, Korea. It was to be done within an hour! The Communists were "at the gates"! American planes landed! People were rushing to the airport! Men drove up in Cadillacs and Packards, jumped out, and threw their car keys to coolies standing by—escaping only with suitcases! Earthly possessions meant little—life was at stake! Later, even the suitcases had to be left because of lack of room. The minds of these men were girded

with one word—"escape"! Here at the foot of the cross, let our minds be focused on "true values" and our task of "carrying this gospel" by lip and life "while it is day"! The cross is a challenge to have a girded, purposeful mind!

#### A CHALLENGE TO LOVE

This may seem a trite saying, but too often this word "love" is limited in meaning. John 3:16 should be quoted with emphasis on the words, "so loved." Let us not forget the first of John's epistles! Let us hear the words exhorting to love not merely "in word, but in deed and truth." We are afraid of "nailprints"—love that costs. I Corinthians 13 needs to get out of the Bible! It needs to get into the actual experience of individual Christians and the church! Stand at the "foot of the cross" and read this chapter. The cross is only the beginning—we are to be living channels. In the light of the cross, and under the gaze of the crucified Christ, let us be ashamed of our "un-Christlikeness" and here take up the challenge to be a channel of love to a love-hungry and needy world. Many cold and hard hearts and "impossible situations" would dissolve with love touching them. There would be marked victories which arguments and cold logic fail to achieve.

Let us remain at the foot of the cross till "Calvary love" permeates, equips, and challenges us! Love will melt the "rough spots" which clash, and irritate, and cause friction in church life! A weary world will better see Christ at work!

#### A CHALLENGE TO GIVE

Paul pointed to the cross when he said that he wanted to see the same grace in the Corinthian Christians as was in the Lord Jesus. "For your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Spending time in the "cross atmosphere" has a way of touching the heart-strings and loosening the purse-strings! A Christian cannot stay very long in the vicinity of the cross without being challenged to give liberally, and more liberally. "Give till it hurts?" Yes, and after "it hurts." That is the "Jesus' way"! That is the challenge of the cross!

#### A CHALLENGE TO GO

One cannot remain long at the cross without considering the distance from heaven to the "hill" outside Jerusalem. Distance, not to be measured in miles, but in "depths of humility"! "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" What majestic hymns have been written concerning this! What gems of Scripture glow with this truth of Christ's humiliation! We cannot think long of "the Word (that) was made flesh, and dwelt among us," until we feel the stir of the missionary impulse. Unless we "go", the gospel stops, and it is "for naught" that Christ died! The mission call may be across the table, across the street, across town—or across the ocean!

The cross is the promise of His guidance, protection,

(Continued on Page 2)