

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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Contributing Editors: Revs. F. Dunlop, C. B. Stairs

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— Guest Editorial —

OUR MASTER MOTIVE

Editor "Free Methodist"

Which way is your life inclining? The Psalmist prayed, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies" (Psa. 119:36), and again, "Incline not my heart to any evil thing" (Pst. 141:4). The way my heart inclines will fix the direction in which the life moves. Incline it to God's testimonies, and it will ultimately gain them. Life's dominant bias determines both its gains and its character.

The dip of the ground decides which way the water will run. Life's tendencies are prophecies of its attainment.

The Bible is full of instances of this fact. Lot's life is summed up in this saying concerning him, "And Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom." Sodom was the evil city of the plain. When the time came for Lot to choose for himself the way he should go, he left his uncle Abraham, who looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and inclined his life towards Sodom. Thereby was his destiny determined. Only time was needed to unfold its tragic issues.

It is not likely Lot had any fixed intention of becoming a Sodomite. He would have resented any such suggestion that it was even possible for him to become one when he took the first step away from Abraham. He no doubt made resolutions not to lower himself to the level of that wicked town. All he wanted was to gain its advantages, and he was not going to allow his religious scruples to rob him of those. But the trend of life is more powerful than our separate resolutions. It overrides our single actions. It takes the reins and drives us far beyond our wishes, and then makes our wishes alter themselves to suit its purposes. Lot, moving towards Sodom, gradually became more Sodomlike, and his children more Sodomlike still, until they all ended up in unspeakable depravity.

Daniel, on the other hand, had his window open towards Jerusalem, the place which God especially honored. This pattern of his life indicated the trend of his thoughts and the direction of his soul. His environment was most evil, but he fixed his heart upon better things. The pull of his life was in a different direction. The result was that he lived a life of heroic grandeur and noble purity in the very cesspool of iniquity. His life became

a pilgrimage towards the city not made with hands, though the way to it lay through a lions' den and much fiery trial.

Every life has a master motive, a dominant tendency, and that it is which determines both where it will arrive, and what will be its character on the way.

"Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,

And not the calm or the strife."

John Bunyan has shown this very clearly in one of the incidents in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian and Pliable fell into the Slough of Despond together. Pliable managed to get out, but left Christian immediately and gave up the pilgrimage. "Wherefore," we are told, "Christian was left to stumble in the Slough of Despond alone, but still he endeavored to struggle to that side that was furthest from his own house, and next to the wicket gate." That is, he still went on, in spite of falling into the mire. The side a person makes for out of his difficulties will determine his achievement, as to whether he will move towards good or evil, purity or depravity, God or Satan.

The great need of the Christian life is to lay hold of a fixed purpose and to have planted within the heart a strong, holy bias. No stronger argument can be given for possessing an eye which seeks only God's glory, for not being content with less than a sanctified heart and life.

There is a striking passage in Maeterlinck's "Wisdom and Destiny" which is worth pondering:

"Let us always remember that nothing befalls us that is not of the nature of ourselves... Whether you climb up the mountain or go down the hill to the valley, whether you journey to the end of the world or merely walk round your house, none but yourself shall meet you on the highway of fate. If Judas go forth tonight, it is towards Judas his steps will tend, nor will chance for betrayed be lacking.. Our adventures hover around us like bees round the hive when preparing to swarm. They wait until the mother-idea has at last come forth from our soul, and no sooner has she appeared than they all come rushing towards her. Be false, and falsehoods will haste to you, love, and adventures will flock to you throbbing with love. They seem to be all on the watch for the signal we hoist from within."

If we be wise we shall see to it that we have the proper master passion. The prime necessity of a rightly-governed life is to surrender it to God's commanding purpose. Is the love of God "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"?

Wherefore pray, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies."

O SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD!

by James Montgomery

O Spirit of the living God,
In all Thy plenitude of grace,
Where'er the foot of man hath trod,
Descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love,
To preach the reconciling Word;
Give power and unction from above,
Where'er the joyful sound is heard.

Be darkness, at Thy coming, light;
Confusion—order, in Thy path;
Souls without strength inspire with might;
Bid mercy triumph over wrath.

Baptize the nations; far and nigh
The triumphs of the cross record;
The name of Jesus glorify,
Till every kindred call Him Lord!

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