

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness.—Isa. 35-8

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PERSONALITY VERSUS

THE HOLY SPIRIT

By H. C. Mullen.

I suppose no human being shall ever be able to determine the line that marks the boundary between what is merely human and what is divine. It is an ever occurring question just how far human personality figures in the moving of souls toward God. Personally, I shall never quite believe that the gospel truth preached by one person would have any more effect than the same gospel preached by another, granting that they were equally saved and consecrated to God. As I said, no one can decide the question, but we can all have our private opinion of the matter. I do not believe that God puts as much premium on pleasing personality as we humans do. This worship of personality approaches very close to idolatry. Nowhere is it more noticeable than in the gospel ministry and nowhere is it more out of place. The results of it are deplorable to the extreme. If God anoints a person and sends him out to preach His Word, God is going to honor His servant and Word irrespective of his personal appearance or mannerisms.

When people attend upon the preaching of the gospel for mere entertainment, as is the case with a multitude, of course, in that case they receive better entertainment when the speaker is beautiful, well mannered and eloquent. But when people want to hear the word of God, that they may profit thereby, it matters little about the manner of serving or the dish that it is served on; it is the nourishment they want and not the chinaware. No hungry man quibbles over the dishes or the cuisine, for it is the food he wants. The strongest man would soon starve to death with chinaware and cut-glass with nothing on it. Truly, it is very fine when one can have both the fine dishes and the delicacies at the same time.

Along comes some evangelist with pleasing personality, full of smiles and graceful manners. He bows low to the ladies and is gushing and entertaining. The whole community is captivated. He preaches a very good gospel, almost radical in some respects, but is far too wise to call a spade a spade. His altars are filled, the church is thrilled, the pastor sinks in the estimation of the people until he is a mere point without magnitude, and everyone says, "Oh, if we had a preacher like that we would live in the midst of Pentecost the year around!" With a flourish and a waving of the hand, he bids goodbye to the enthusiastic and adoring crowd that have assembled to see him off, and he is gone, carrying away about four-fifths of the religion of the congregation with him. The old stage coach of a pastor has to stay on his job and buck the outgoing tide of receding emotion, and struggle hard to put some substantial fuel on the flaring brush heap that is threatening every minute to go out.

Along comes another evangelist. He is of homely countenance, grave and serious. Carries a heavy burden that takes away his lightheartedness. He is distant and reserved in his manner,

treats an old grayheaded man with the same warmth and civility as he gives the blushing woman of thirty. He goes to the pulpit and in rugged English, with no equivocation, calls a spade a spade, and drives the sword to the hilt. The crowd gets suspicious that he means them, and that he has blood in his eye, and they scent danger. The attendance falls off and some suddenly remember they have business out of town.

He boosts the pastor, and lets the church know that if it were not for the faithful pastors who silently stand by the staff, there would soon be no place for the evangelist to shine. He gets a dozen seekers at the altar while the other got a hundred. He gets a small remuneration, and walks to the station alone, and goes away to his next appointment. Now, there are not one in a hundred that have spiritual perception enough to see it, but the last evangelist has done more to forward the kingdom, and edify the church, than the first. Out of the dozen that were at the altar perhaps seven of them got through to God and possibly some were sanctified wholly. Perhaps the whole dozen will unite with the church where they found God. When revival number one is over and the evangelist gone we will begin to look for the results. At the end of two weeks it may be possible to locate a dozen with a personal testimony. Six may unite with the church. Evangelist number one has told the people that it made no difference what church they went to, or joined, so long as they were saved, and let all and sundry distinctly understand that he was not preaching for any particular sect. All this sounds well and catches the public ear, and is sweet as honey to their taste. We are in an age of drifters and shirkers and not many like responsibility and hard work.

My position would not be largely accepted, but to be absolutely candid, I believe that a preacher as homely as Socrates, without a tooth in his head, with a hump back, and crooked legs and one blind eye, who breaks the laws of grammar at every sentence, but preaches the gospel in its purity, who sees only a handful of seekers in the run of a year, will eventually have as many real cases of salvation when the final count is made, as the gentleman preacher with the prepossessing personality and gushing manners, that infatuates the crowd. People that want God, and are after God, and are honest enough to really find God, can and will find Him under the last preacher just as surely as under the first, and possibly better.

Multitudes of people have been converted to the preacher and not to God, and while it may be hard sometimes to distinguish them for a while down here, the final day will reveal the truth.

This weakness of having men's persons in admiration is a disgusting spectacle. It is condemned in Scripture. James says: "My brethren you must not make distinctions between one man and another while you are striving to maintain faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our glory". For suppose a man comes into one of your meetings wearing gold rings and fine clothes, and

there also comes in a poor man wearing shabby clothes, and you pay court to the one who wears the fine clothes and say, "Sit here; this is a good place;" while to the poor man you say, "Stand there, or sit on the floor at my feet;" is it not plain that in your hearts you have little faith, seeing that you have become judges full of wrong thoughts?" (Weymouth's Trans.)

The time has come in some quarters when a preacher need not expect a call on the basis of his own worth and merits, but must depend on whether or not he has enough personal admirers to create a pull in his favor. But in this connection, I don't know which is the most despicable, the church that is influenced in this way, or the preacher that tries to court and win a few admirers, for the purpose of getting a call.

I have actually heard of a case where a person stated their intention of waiting the arrival of a favorite preacher before making a start in the Christian life. I have known of people waiting for a year in order to be baptized by a favorite preacher.

Many could not even think of being married by the pastor on the field, but would have to send a hundred miles to bring their pet minister to perform the ceremony. And lastly, some have it all understood beforehand that their favorite preacher must officiate at their funeral, no matter what the inconvenience, nor how it makes the pastor feel, or the public to stare, to see the pastor stand aside as a ninny while someone else performs his proper office.

Sometimes, people will shout and seemingly get blessed under the preaching of the one they admire, and act as though they had good religion, but are as silent as the Sphinx when someone else, who preaches the same truth, takes the platform. I have noticed even that some will claim to be sanctified under one preacher but not under another.

Sanctified personality may be used of God to some unknown extent, but unsanctified personality hinders rather than helps the Holy Spirit. The more preachers that will stoop to make use of a winning personality, or will use gush and blarney to get seekers at an altar, or members into his church, the harder it makes it for the fellow that does not deal in that kind of goods. Old carnality will feed and fatten on gush and blarney and the like, and become triply refined in its essence, so much so that no amount of truth can avail in blasting it out, or make the possessor confess it. If personal appearance and rare gifts had much to do with the success of the gospel, then there would have been small show for the great apostle Paul. A good deal of evidence goes to show that he was anything but prepossessing in his personal appearance, and he made no claim to eloquence. It is generally supposed that he was partially blind, that he was a man of inferior stature, and bore many scars received in battle with the enemy. His own testimony was, "I in outward appearance am base among you", or as in Weymouth's translation, "I when among you have not an imposing personal

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