

The King's Highway

MAPLE RIDGE, N. B.
Mrs. R. Alexander Blaney
May 37

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

VOL. XXXII.

MONCTON, N. B., FEB. 15, 1937

NO. 34

WHAT ABOUT SO-CALLED "PROPHECY" TEACHING AND PREACHING?

By Rev. George W. Ridout

The land, or rather the pulpit, is being inundated by a tremendous amount of preaching and teaching which carries the name of "prophecy." A lot of excitement and sensationalism is caused thereby and a lot of shallow thinking. Singularly, this kind cometh forth not from men of eminent piety and real scholarship—men versed in the languages and in the science of Biblical exegesis, men who think historically not hysterically—but the bulk of this teaching and preaching comes from the ready pen and the vociferous speech of copyists and second-hand dealers who read and swallow everything that comes along in the way of "prophecy" (so-called) and then reproduce the thing in their sermons, speeches, books, pamphlets, etc., and the unsuspecting public is expected to take everything they say and write "ex cathedra" and as the latest information handed down by "inspiration" (or rather perspiration) on the questions under consideration.

I was told of one evangelist preaching last winter (my informant was a highly-educated Free Methodist pastor) who said unhesitatingly and with considerable insistence that by June of 1936 all the churches and chapels and temples in the United States of America where the gospel was preached would be closed tight by the Communists, who were going to take this country and do in America what they did in Russia! Here it is January, 1937, and the Communists have not put across that trick in the United States. Preachers and teachers who have and who exercise an historical perspective, and who have an insight into the philosophy of history would not likely make a statement like that except in their sleep!

Now what concerns one about this whole crop of modern-day prophecy is that scarcely any of it comes from sanctified scholarship, but the bulk of it comes from men of scarcely any scholarship or training in this field, who exploit with cocksureness and in many instances with fine financial returns.

I wonder if it is not a fact that in this field of prophecy many fine, splendid, thoroughly-equipped, sanctified scholars hesitate to approach "where angels fear to tread." Was it not Dr. Adam Clarke—the man who spent over forty years in producing the greatest commentary on the Bible—who when he came to the Book of Revelation trembled and felt himself thoroughly unworthy and unfit to handle such momentous themes as were therein treated! How learned was Dr. Adam Clarke? Was he not one of the greatest linguists of his day? Had he not delved down deep into all the ancient and modern learnings? Did not Spurgeon say of him that he was the Prince of Commentators and his commentary was the greatest in a thousand years? What about Dr. Daniel Steele, one of the greatest Greek exegetes God ever gave to the holiness movement? Where are his books on prophecy?

Now it will be instantly said, "These men did not live so close to the imminent second coming as we do! We are at the end of the Gentile age and God is revealing and making known these things today in a manner never known before!"

I suspect our kind old blacksmith friend over in New England some eighty years ago or more had the same conception. He thought the end was at hand sure. He figured it out from the Book of Daniel and had it all fixed up for the Lord's second coming. He got his white gown made, and thousands of his followers got their gowns made and everything was to be in readiness for that particular morning! But nothing happened! Russel, however, held on to a certain date, and though nobody saw it, he and his followers still hold 1874 as the date when the second coming actually did take place! Russel further taught that the end of the world would be 1914, and the "whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord." That was the year of the terrible World War!

Now some will ask, "Don't you believe in the second coming?" Assuredly! I preach it, but I will not preach it by the calendar or almanac. Am I a "pre" or a "post"? I am decidedly a "pre". I stand with Moody, Torrey, A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson and all Biblical premillennialists! The difference between me and some other "pre's" is that I hold to my Bible more than to almanac and calendar, and my Bible says: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

I heard a very noted prophecy (?) preacher several times during last winter. He set forth to prove the United States in prophecy from a most obscure text. He threw great energy into his speech; he spared not himself. At the close there was no conviction, no altar call, nobody seeking God. I thought, "If that man with his great powers would throw himself into a sin and repentance-judgment day-salvation ministry like Billy Sunday did he would move thousands."

Now what I fear from all this so-called "prophecy" propaganda is that it is diverting us from the main business of preaching the gospel of sin and salvation and calling sinners to repentance and believers to holiness. I remember talking with Commissioner Brengle last winter on the subject. He deplored so much of this speculative "prophecy" preaching. He held that it was diverting us from the main line we should preach more insistently for the revival.

The greatest need of America today is a heaven-sent revival of religion, and I am persuaded that we should join hands and hearts and voices more and more in proclaiming it and getting ready for it through prayer and intercession and deep digging, preaching that will bring on repentance for sin.

Personally, I thank God for the way He has been using J. Edwin Orr, that young Irishman, in preparing the way of the Lord as he journeys around the world in revival interest. In his last book, "This Is the Victory," he says: "It is said

that heresy is contorted truth. I think that this axiom applies to the amazing racket of 'prophecy teachers' in the States. There are certain men called of God for this ministry, endued with insight into the wonderful prophetic scriptures. To these I say, 'God bless you in the ministry that He has given you!' But there are twice as many copyists who tour the country preaching pet theories. Sometimes an evangelist gets out of touch with the Lord and finds that he can no longer preach an evangelistic message with unction from above. He turns to prophecy, a subject of which he knows little. He then joins the great band of sensationalists who damage the cause of Christ. The predictions made by some of these false prophets are utterly childish."

CHEERFULNESS

It will help us in learning the lesson of cheerfulness if we persistently train ourselves to see the good things, the bright things, in our common life. There are some people who seem to have eyes only for the unpleasant things. They find every bit of roughness and hardness in their daily path. They see at once, and see it magnified, every disagreeable thing that comes into their life. They remember all the unhappy experiences they have ever had. They keep on their heart's walls the pictures of all their vanished joys and faded hopes. They write with a diamond on their window panes the records of all the trials, adversities and misfortunes they have ever suffered. But, on the other hand, they forget all their blessings. They hang up no pictures of the joys they did not lose, which have filled their life on so many bright days. They have no memory for the beautiful things, the things of gladness.

There are few habits more common, even among Christians, than this of remembering the unpleasant things and forgetting the pleasant things; and there is no other habit which is more inimical to joy. He who would always be of good cheer must break this habit—if it has fastened itself in his life—and must learn, must train himself, to see the beautiful things and to be blind to the disagreeable things. The truth is, there are, in the ordinary life, a thousand pleasant things—favours, joys, comforts, things to cheer—to one unpleasant thing, one real cause for happiness. It is a shame, therefore, to let the one bit of roughness, trial, or suffering spoil all the gladness of the thousand blessings, the one discordant note mar all the music of the grand symphony. We should learn to look at life, not to find misery and discomfort in it, but to find cheer and beauty.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

If any little word of ours can make one life the brighter,
God help us speak that little word.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust, unburnish'd, not to shine in use;
As tho' to breathe were life.