

The King's Highway

Rev. L. K. Mullen, Nov. 1957

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WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIAN?

Dr. Claude A. Ries in "American Holiness Journal"

Dean Charles Brown tells of a youth who went to preach a sermon on repentance and began his discourse: "My beloved hearers, if I may call you such, may I venture to suggest that you are under some obligation to repent, so to speak, and if you don't there is a remote possibility that you may be damned, as it were, to a certain extent."

We laugh at that, but this student preacher is not the only one living in the drab gray because he lacks definite convictions on things white and black. At an international gathering of young people in New York City, we are told, a young American asked a cultured girl from Burma what was the religious belief of the majority of the Burmese. The young lady informed him that it was Buddhism. The American said quite casually, "Oh, well, that doesn't matter; all religions are the same anyway."

The Burmese girl, looking directly at the young man, said: "If you had lived in my country you would not say that I have seen what centuries of superstition, fear and indifference to social problems have done for my people. We need the truth and uplift of Christianity. When I became a Christian it cost me something. If your religion has cost you more, you might be more aware of its superiority. My country needs Christ."

Has your religion cost you anything? The devout Jew of Old Testament days did not think his religion cost him until he got beyond the giving of fifteen per cent of his earnings, ten per cent in tithe and five per cent in offerings.

Has your religion cost you in time taken in devotion, or does God just get the "ragged edge of nothing"?

Has your religion cost you in honest Bible study so you "can give a reason for the hope that is in you," directly from God's Word? On the great tenets of our faith are you in the gray, as the preacher mentioned above was on repentance?

Do you know from God's Word—

Why you are a Protestant and not a Catholic?

Why you are evangelical and not a modernist?

Why you believe holiness of life is God's standard of normal Christian living?

Why God is not pleased with mediocrity in Christian living?

Why living to God's glory is the end of our creation and redemption rather than just being able to go to heaven?

As Christian witnesses we must with John, "speak that we do know," and not just think or theorize. Until we "know," that is, "know experientially," the truth "as it is in Christ Jesus," we will be gray-drab Christian religionists, lacking in spiritual discernment and in power of authoritative witnessing.

Do not be a mere "somehow" Christian!

THE PERILS OF POOR PREACHING

By J. C. Masee in "The Watchman Examiner"

Fenelon, a French preacher, is quoted, "Dullness in the pulpit is sin against the Holy Ghost." Certainly the theme to which the man in the pulpit is commissioned is never dull nor lacking in inspiration. The gospel message is within itself the perennial sensation of the ages. No congregation ever remained indifferent to its worthy presentation; hostile, yes, but indifferent, never! The gospel is an ambassadorial message seeking reconciliation between God and men—all men. The preacher speaks with plenipotential authority, mediating between God and men. How dare anyone clothe the royal mandate in the drab and dreary garments which could be fashioned only in the untidy workshop of an unworthy workman?

The ministerial offices of the churches—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—all function under direct executive decree of the Head of the church (Eph. 4:10-13). These must all major in publishing the good news of the kingdom of God. They deal with great matters—repentance and the forgiveness of sins, and the reconstruction of life upon the basis of right relation to God. Every public utterance of such an one should be a momentous event.

Poor preaching is filled with peril to the preacher himself. The gospel is a trust. Poor preaching betrays the trust, and thereby cheapens the ministerial office and degrades the preacher. Mediocrity has no place in the minister of Christ. A willing inferiority betrays an unworthy estimate of God's blessing of reconciliation offered to men in Christ. Poor preaching betrays, therefore, a low estimate of his own trustworthiness in dealing with matters of gravest possible concern. Poor preaching undermines the moral fiber and disintegrates the spiritual powers of the preacher. There can be no reason for poor preaching. No excuse of being busy with church business, of management and care of the church, can avail here. To offer such an excuse is to confess one's betrayal of trust.

Poor preaching is also a peril to the people who hear it. To them the preacher is the living oracle of the only living God to men under the sentence of eternal death. People need to be alerted mentally, aroused emotionally, and persuaded to yield their will to the sovereign lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sermon is a costly thing. It must reveal truth with crystal clearness and be delivered with a holy and a consuming passion. Its structure must have unity, order, and movement, achieved only at the expense of a complete self-investment of labor and love in its preparation. It can be effective only if its mortar be mixed with blood. He who preaches worthily must always be studying to show himself a workman not ashamed, approved of God, even though Solomon was

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