

POPULAR WITH ONE MAN

Major Whittle and P. P. Bliss, while engaged in evangelistic work for the Master, started for a new field of labor on a bitterly cold night. As they passed from the station-house towards the railroad train, they reached a gate before which a man stood, who said to the hurrying passengers, „Show your tickets.” Of course the demand was annoying to many who were compelled to unloose their heavy wrappings, and to withdraw their hands from comfortable gloves; and it is not strange that expressions of discontent and of anger were loud and frequent. When the two Evangelists were going through the gate, the Major remarked pleasantly to the keeper, „You are not a very popular man with this crowd tonight.” „I don't care a cent for this crowd,” was the surly reply; „I just want to be popular with one man.” „Ah, my brother,” said dear Bliss on entering the train, „that is a lesson for you and for me.”

Yes, and it is a lesson for every Christian in these last and perilous days. More men are making shipwreck of their faith on the coast of popular favor than in any other part of life's treacherous sea. They are seen all along the shore like dismasted and rotting hulks, instead of leading and pointing the way to the peaceful haven, that can not be far distant. Of too many who commenced their public ministry as faithful witnesses for Jesus, it can be said, as the lonely apostle wrote of a former friend and companion, „Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” (2 Tim. 4:10).

So in the last state of the professing Christian body described in the epistle to the church of the Laodiceans,

where the end and doom of Christendom are graphically portrayed, we have the same subtle and fatal spirit at work. Laodicea means „Justice for the people,” and while the Church boasts that she is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, it is evidently implied that she is governed by popular clamor, and Christ is turned out of his own house, left standing at the door, knocking to catch the ear of any man, before the whole corrupt mass is spued out of his mouth. Rev. 3:14-20.

Are not the evidences of this popular control of the Church increasing every day with frightful rapidity. Custom after custom, and doctrine after doctrine, sanctioned by divine enactment and sacred by the faith and observance of the saints through eighteen centuries, are yielded at the

demand of public sentiment, until the pulpit, to a lamentable extent, has become a place for the delivery of popular lectures, and the Church building a place for popular entertainments. Let a preacher openly deny the Lord who bought him, disowning his divinity, ridiculing the necessity of his atoning blood, sneering at the authority of the Scriptures as superior to human reason, and at once the secular press, which in our cities at least is almost wholly in the hands of so-called „free thinkers,“ lauds him to the skies, as a man of genius, and broad culture, and large charity. Nay, multitudes in the Church unite with the enemies of Christ in celebrating his praise, especially if he increases the pew rentals, and attracts a crowd.

Well, be it so. It is just what the word of God plainly tells us must come to pass in the last day of perilous times, when the church will contain „lovers of their own selves; ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.“ (2 Tim. 3:2-5.) „When they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables,“ (2 Tim. 4:3-4); when „there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.“ (1 Pet. 2:1.)

But this furnishes all the stronger reason why those „who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time,“ should more and more make it their single aim „to be popular with one man.“ Let them not care a cent for the crowd out of the church, or in the church, but each say like the Apostle, with lofty and unswerving consecration: „None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.“ (Acts 20:24.)—*“The Truth.”*

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