

Bringing Christianity Into Disrepute

by John Hames

The sermon addresses various ways Christians can unintentionally bring disrepute to their faith through their actions and attitudes.

Scripture: Proverbs 13:15, Matthew 11:30, Romans 14:16, Galatians 2:18, 1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3

Topics: "Christian Witness", "Godly Living"

Description

John Hames preaches on the importance of not allowing our good deeds to be spoken of as evil, emphasizing that even Jesus Christ faced criticism despite His purity. He highlights common ways Christians bring disrepute to Christianity, such as portraying the Christian life as burdensome, looking back at past sins, and engaging in behaviors that contradict their testimonies. Hames also addresses the negative impact of constantly borrowing money, soliciting finances from unbelievers, and adorning oneself slovenly, urging believers to live in a way that honors God.

Transcript

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of" (Rom. 14:16).

It is a well-known fact that no matter how piously one may live, he will never obtain the confidence of every one or ever reach a plane where he is exempt from criticism. Jesus Christ, the immaculate Son of God, was the purest and holiest being that this world ever knew and yet He was censured and found fault with all the way from the cradle to the cross.

It is also true, in many instances, that the Christian people give their enemies great reason to criticize and censure them. Let us briefly observe some of the most common ways of bringing Christianity into disrepute.

We do so when we testify that the way of the Lord is a hard, up-hill way, that the cross is so dreadfully heavy, etc. All such statements are flat contradictions to the Word of God, for it says: "The way of transgressors [not the child of God] is hard" (Prov. 13:15). Jesus said: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). The Psalmist said: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). Isaiah said: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

Another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute is for those who profess to be Christians to let the unsaved see them looking back, brooding over the things they left behind or everlastingly talking about the great sacrifices they made to become a Christian. All such conduct makes a bad impression upon the unsaved. If salvation is worth anything it is worth everything. When we consider what we gave up from eternity's view-point it is but worthless trash.

Still another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute is to rebuild the things we once destroyed or to return to the things which we once renounced and counted sinful.

It is to be borne in mind that what was once light is always light. There is nothing that will shake the confidence of the unsaved in religion more than to see one of its adherents return to a practice which he once preached and testified against. Paul said: "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (Gal. 2.18).

For one's conduct or conversation when at home or abroad to, in any way, contradict the testimony which he delivers in class meeting on Sunday is another way of disgracing religion. Our lives should be so godly and circumspect at home during the week that our unsaved loved ones will be compelled to believe our testimonies on Sunday. It is a bad sign for wife to hang her head or gnaw the corner of her handkerchief when husband is giving in his testimony. It is also equally as bad for husband and the children to begin looking out of the corner of their eyes while wife zealously testifies of the victories of the past week.

It also becomes quite difficult for little Johnny and Mary to not class Mamma in with the Ananias and Sapphira family after hearing a heart-searching sermon on lying in view of the fact that she had promised them several punishments during the past week but had failed to fulfill her promise. They also found it difficult to forgive her for hoodwinking them with the old Santa Claus and Bogy-man lie which she had been telling them for years.

It also greatly affects the cause of Christ for its adherents to engage too frequently in soliciting finance from the unsaved. Such imprudence has caused the man of God-the mouthpiece of the Spirit-the watchman on Zion's holy hill, to become common in the eyes of the world and be branded scavengers and beggars. May God hasten the day when all His children will pay their tithes and cease to beg corn from the Philistines or go down to Egypt for help!

The habit of constantly borrowing money is not a good one to admit into one's Christian life. We have known people who make a practice of borrowing year in and year out, so to speak. In a certain city, where we once served as pastor, a prominent business man, who was a stranger to us, came to the altar one Sunday morning and prayed through and during the same week one of these borrowing vultures, who spied him at the altar for the first time, went to his office and asked for a loan of nearly a hundred dollars.

Adorning ourselves slovenly and untidily is also another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute. We admit that wearing jewelry, feathers, flowers, laces, silks, satins and other needless adornments are forbidden in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3), yet this does not give us license to be untidy. We should be patterns of neatness, cleanliness and plainness.

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