

General Topics :: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums

A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by chadster, on: 2006/9/12 20:56

I believe it was providence tonight that led me to a set of books I have in my library, (published in the late 1800's) authored by "C.H.M." I got them at a book auction and frankly liked them because of their antique look, and bought them because I am somewhat of a bibliophile. I picked up one of the 6 books tonight and looked for the author's name, but couldn't find anything more than "C.H.M." so I researched it on the net and found that this humble servant of the Lord used only these initials on most of the books he authored. He was C. H. Mackintosh, born in 1820 in Ireland, and was the most prolific of the Brethren writers. He was also involved in the revival that came to that country in 1859.

All of that as background to say, as I was reading some of his writings, I felt strongly that I should share the following excerpt with the readership of SI and particularly with those who engage in these forum discussions. These poignant words challenged me and I pray that they are a blessing and inspiration to you. I tried editing some of this but as I read it, it was all so very good, I just couldn't bring myself to cut anything out. It's a lengthy read but I think most SI forum participants are used to such and even longer. :-)

Blessings, dear brothers and sisters who love the Lord in Truth.

QUESTIONS; AND HOW TO MEET THEM by C.H.M.

I have been very much interested of late in looking at the excellent way in which John the Baptist met the various questions which came before him, for there were many questions in his day, as there are in ours.

What I specially refer to now is presented to us in the Gospel of John (John 1 and John 3). The first question which this dear and honored servant of Christ was called to answer had respect to himself, and of this he makes very short work in deed. "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?"

It is unwelcome to any right-minded person to be asked to speak about himself. So, I doubt not, John found it. He readily told them that he was not the Messiah, that he was not Elijah, that he was not even the prophet. But they wanted a positive answer. "They said unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" Little indeed had he to say of himself. "I" had a very small place in John's thoughts. "A voice." Was this all? Yes; this was all. The Spirit in the prophet had spoken; John quotes the words and there he leaves it. Blessed servant! Honored witness! Would we had more of his excellent spirit, more of his method of answering questions!

But these Pharisees were not satisfied. John's self-hiding spirit was entirely beyond them. "They asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither the prophet?"

Here again the Baptist makes short work. "John answering them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth One among you whom ye know not. He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Thus, as to himself, he was merely a voice. And, as to his work, he baptized with water, and he was only too glad to retire behind that blessed One whose shoe's latchet he felt himself utterly unworthy to unloose.

This is uncommonly fine. I feel assured, my beloved friend, that the lovely spirit displayed by this most illustrious servant of Christ is what you earnestly covet for yourself. And I think I am one with you. I do long to know more and more of this self-hiding—this losing sight of self and its doings, this retiring spirit. Truly it is much needed in this day of egotistical boast and pretension.

Turn with me for a moment to John 3. Here we have another kind of question. It is not now about himself or his work, but about purifying. "There arose a question among some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came to John and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth and all come to Him."

Now this was a mistake, for “Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples.” But this is not the point here. What strikes me is John's mode of settling all questions, right or wrong. He finds a perfect solution for all in the presence of his Lord. “John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.”

How true! How simple! How perfectly obvious! What a complete settlement of every question! If a man has anything at all, from where did it, where could it, come? Surely only from heaven. What a perfect cure for strife, envy, jealousy and emulation! “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” What a tale this tells of earth. What a record it bears to heaven and to God! Not one atom of good on earth but what comes from heaven. Not an atom of good in man but what comes from God. Why then should anyone boast or be jealous or envious? If all goodness is from above, let there be an end of all strife and let all hearts go up in praise to “the Father of lights.”

Thus it was the Baptist met the questions of his day. He let all the questioners know that their questions had little interest for him. And more than that, he let them know where all his interests lay. This blessed servant found all his springs in the Lamb of God, in His precious work, in His glorious Person. The voice of the Bridegroom was enough for him, and having heard that, his joy was full. The question of purifying might be interesting enough in its place, and like all other questions, it had its right and its wrong side, but for John, the Bridegroom's voice was enough. In His presence he found a divine answer to every question, a divine solution for every difficulty. He looked up to heaven and saw every good thing coming from there. He looked into the Bridegroom's face and saw every moral glory centered there. This was enough for him. Why trouble him with questions of any kind— questions about himself or his work, or about purifying? He lived far beyond the region of questions, in the blessed presence of his Lord, and there he found all his heart could ever need.

Now, my much loved friend, it seems to me that you and I would do well to take a leaf out of John's book as regards all this. I need not remind you that in this our day there are questions agitating men's minds. Yes, and some of us are called to account for not expressing ourselves more decidedly on some of these questions. But I believe the devil is doing his utmost to alienate our hearts from Christ and from one another by questions. We ought not to be ignorant of his devices. He does not come openly and say, “I am the devil and I want to divide and scatter you by questions.” Yet this is precisely what he is seeking to do.

Now, it matters not whether the question be right or wrong in itself; the devil can make use of a right question just as effectively as of a wrong one, provided he can succeed in raising that question to undue prominence, causing it to come between our souls and Christ, and between us and our brethren. I can understand a difference in judgment on various minor questions. Christians have differed about such for long centuries and they will continue to differ until the end of time. It is human weakness. But when any question is allowed to assume undue prominence, it ceases to be mere human weakness and becomes a wile of Satan. I may have a very decided judgment on any given point, and so may you. But what I long for now is a thorough sinking of all questions and a rejoicing together in hearing the Bridegroom's voice and going on together in the light of His blessed countenance. This will confound the enemy. It will effectively deliver us from prejudice and partiality and from cliques. We shall then measure one another, not by our views of any particular question, but by our appreciation of the Person of Christ and our devotion to His cause.

In a word, my beloved and valued friend, what I long for is that you and I, and all our dear brethren throughout the whole world, may be characterized by a deep-toned, thorough devotion to the name and truth and cause of Christ. I long to cultivate broad sympathies that can take in every true lover of Christ, even though we don't see eye to eye on all minor questions. At best “we know but in part,” and we can never expect people to agree with us about questions. But if Christ be our one absorbing object, all other things will assume their right place, their relative value, their proper proportions. “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect (as many as have Christ for their one object) be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule (Christ), and mind the same thing” (Christ). The moment anything else but Christ is introduced as a rule to walk by, it is simply the work of the devil. Of this I am as sure as I hold this pen in my hand.

May the Lord keep us all close to Himself, walking together, not in sectarianism, but in true brotherly love, seeking the blessing and prosperity of all who belong to Christ and promoting in every possible way His blessed cause until He come!

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/9/12 21:40

Dear brother,

Thank you for posting this. It put my face in the dirt where it belongs. Why am I such a worm that desires to be elevated by wings of pride? I have so much to learn, so many deaths to die. Reading the answers of the Baptist is like a beam of light blasting through the cobwebs. Give me more of this man's theology!

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by chadster, on: 2006/9/12 22:11

Brother Paul...thanks for your response to this post. I admire your humility and brokenness. In my opinion, you're one of the few posters who always write with a spirit of humility and in deference to others. Thank you for your example of godly repentance. When we see ourselves in the light of His Word, we all must bow in the dust...what arrogance and audacity possesses us that we speak as if we have the "answers" and that others should buy our opinions?? God save us from ourselves.

We should ask ourselves before we write: Is what I'm expressing here a stench in the nostrils of God or a sweet fragrance? May the Lord conform all of us to His image.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/9/12 23:16

Brother,

Thank you for sharing this article by C.H.M. I have a few of his expositional old volumes which are gems. I think it is a timely word and we need to heed to it, may God purify these conversations and discussions. May we submit to his process in our hearts to refine us.

If anyone else hasn't read this please do:

SI ANNOUNCEMENT: gracious speech

https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=12316&forum=16&2

Re: - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/9/13 0:13

i just listen to gracious speech. very sobering. cut me thru the heart. thank you for the encouragement.

Lord, forgive me for my unclean lips. forgive me for all the times i use my speech to hurt others and poison their hearts. forgive me for grieving your heart in the way i have used my tongue. Lord, have mercy and make these lips clean. i pray that my lips will only utter words of life and hope in You. that these lips will be used to heal and bring hope to others.

God, help me extend mercy and love to others as you have extended mercy and love to me. oh, that You may be so glorified!

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by Kolombian (), on: 2006/9/13 11:19

Thanks for this brother Chadster...

It is highly important for us, as Christians to be always focused in what God really wants us to be.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27)

It's so easy in these days of "answers for everything" to have everybody self opinions of all...even Christians having self opinion on what God says...Just as was back in the time of C.H.M as he said when to much questions were expected to be answered...

May God let us see when we are moving our eyes from the focus where they shouldn't be moved ever, and never let us speak of our "precious", well studied, highly "reasonable" answers, and as Jesus said: "But 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"

ived of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24)
This reminds me of a powerful portion of Corinthians that says:

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?.....
But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (1 Cor 3:5-8, 11:3)

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2006/9/14 18:49

C.H.Mackintosh, wrote :

-The Mackintosh Treasury - Miscellaneous Writings.

-The notes on Pentateuch".

His writings are extremely worth reading, concise and easy to read. Especially the "Miscellaneous Writings", which touch on many relevant issues pertaining a Christian's daily walk.

I highly recommend them. Thanks Chadster for reminding me of them.

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2006/10/7 22:33

Thankyou chadster and mamaluk for posting these writings and books of this blessed man of God...oh how simple and focused John the Baptist was...it truly brings me to shame. I have been captured by this thread upon awakening this very day...Praise God for His great Love that truly surpasses the wisdom of this world. Please pray for me saints, that by the grace of God, i will become everything that Christ Jesus desires for me to become - as full of His Holy Spirit as it is possible for any child of His to be full of. Thankyou again, and very much appreciative of your services in Him!!!!!!!!!!

richie

Re: CHM - posted by Munchkin (), on: 2006/11/21 19:50

Chadster, thank you so much for posting that. So humbling. Lord, I'm so sorry for anything I said that hurt you; I'm sorry for any pain or confusion I've caused in other believers.

I know nothing and I am nothing without you.

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by Goldminer (), on: 2007/1/14 0:33

Thank you for posting this. I just read this for the first time and feel it is what we need to help is in our post on every subject. Most excellent.

Re: - posted by Vader, on: 2007/1/30 17:25

Thank you brother for posting that word. It certainly changes hearts and minds. kinda brings things into perspective.

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by enid, on: 2007/2/5 14:57

In view of the fact that recently, there seems to be a spurt of strife, ego, pride and self displayed by a few on the website, I thought it good to give this article an opportunity to be read again.

Along with 1 Cor 13:4-5 which says, 'love suffers long and is kind, love does not envy, love does not parade itself, is not puffed up

does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.

It would be good if we were all to do some soul searching.

God bless.

Re: - posted by CJF (), on: 2007/3/17 22:44

It is a timely word, and much appreciated.

Re: - posted by Onesimus4God (), on: 2007/4/8 12:35

A timely word indeed, and a word for all time. I also especially like Romans Chapter 12 in it's entirety. In it contains the complete behavior model for all christians for all time, and the key to successful Godly living. Praise God. Any kind of organization could run like a well oiled clock, if it's members, civil or spiritual would simply apply themselves to keeping it's guidelines and directives.

Shalom,

"O"

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/4/9 10:18

A perspective.

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id16110&post_id124801&order1&viewmodeflat&pid124739&forum40#124801) Amazing Testimony Of Richard Wurmbrand (Interview)

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 1:28

A word of truth given to John, expanded on and preserved 148 years ago, researched by another a 148 years later and given to many on sermonindex 2007. And they thought they shut John up when they sent him to the Island of Patmos. Luke 21:33

33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Re: A Word To End all Strife and Divisiveness on SI Forums - posted by nrlcharlie (), on: 2007/8/27 22:01

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You...

I am relatively new to SI and read through some threads and was (To be honest) a little shocked at the way some members spoke to each other. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a part of it at all.

I probably just mis-understood what they were saying but I was still confused at it all and even a little bewildered. But I was touched by this post.

But this was a breath of fresh air

This truly brought some light on some inner battles I have been fighting lately.

It was incredible to read.

Thanks again I now feel free!

Re: Others - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/8/28 9:46

Welcome nrlcharlie,

Saw this last night and felt a stab of grief ...

Quote:
-----I am relatively new to SI and read through some threads and was (To be honest) a little shocked at the way some members spoke to each other. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a part of it at all.

It is difficult sometimes, there are times here where those of us who ought to know better ... drift and forget, forget those like yourself perhaps peering into these things, forget about others, forget about ramifications, lose the ability to thwart our own tongues for the sake of something better ...

And yet sometimes the discussions are needed just to expose ourselves to areas of neglect and are then a help towards growth and maturity, if we could just look behind the topics and controversies and get at the substance.

Hope you might read the disclaimer(s) at bottom here, they are somewhat helpful as explanatory to the ebb and flow of this setting.

To the rest of us, hope that we might take a new members initial thoughts to heart and reconsider, recalibrate ourselves ... once again.

Glad you are here.

Re: - posted by nrlcharlie (), on: 2007/8/28 21:07

Hey thanks for your encouragement i really appreciate it...

I have been looking around and reading many of the forums and have come to the conclusion that it isn't actually the norm. The first 2 or 3 I read were pretty heated but most of the others I have read are great and very helpful.

There are so many different perspectives on issues and I am really enjoying just reading and staying out of the discussion at the moment, though I will eventually develop confidence enough to actually join in I'm sure.

Thanks again mate and be fully blessed!!!

Send me a message of any sermons you think would be helpful. I have heard all the top 20 downloads but this site is massive and one sure can be confused where to start.

Re: A word - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/8/28 22:12

Hi nrlcharlie,

Here is good thread towards that end;

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id16893&forum35&post_id&refreshGo) SermonIndex "gems"

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/1/15 11:15

It's humbling to offer a scripture which I, myself, have difficulty walking out in my own life. Nonetheless, I love it and pray the Holy Spirit will never cease to correct me when I stray from it.

Proverbs 12:18 "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

How important is it for us to be right? Thought well of? Superior? To win? "...as far as it depends on us..." We have no excuses.

The beatitudes describe the very clothing of a regenerated Christian: Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

Living in loving fellowship is important to the Father so it should be important to us.

Re: MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY... - posted by ccchhrrriiss () , on: 2008/1/17 15:52

Hello...

Several years ago, I knew a very good brother in the Lord with whom I shared many words of encouragement. This brother was very transparent with his set of beliefs in regard to doctrine. He passionately shared not only the elementary truths about the Gospel, but he was fervent in sharing what often amounted to controversial truths (or sometimes, *supposed* truths) in regard to the Faith. With many of the controversial issues, I actually agreed with him. He called into question some of the "established acceptances" of the local (and American) churches. He boldly preached matters of personal holiness that weren't completely settled in the hearts of some believers (particularly in regard to dress, behavior, music, media, etc...).

Needless to say, this brother was extremely abrasive with those who grew tired of hearing his "call for holiness." This brother regularly pointed to particular "sins" that have become common in many of today's churches, and warned about how these things are "vulgar" in the sight and ears of God. He was particularly harsh on Christian music (which would make me cringe when he would share, even though I agreed with much of what he said). When others declined to believe his more words, he would argue and sometimes even treat them as "unwilling to acknowledge the truth" (or sometimes, he would warn them that they were in danger "believing a lie"). I remember having to excuse myself from the room when he debated some friends about tithing. He pointed his finger at them and accused them of being thieves (because he insisted that tithing is still an obligation).

I still associated and fellowshiped with this brother, because his sincerity was never in question. He was undoubtedly a lover of God, and his zeal for the holiness of God was the likely root of his abrasiveness. This brother's rough manner of speech was not limited to just what he felt were "assaults" on the holiness of God. He also boldly declared the "truth" in regard to a wide array of understood doctrines. There was no room for debate, because he claimed that these matters were "firmly established in Heaven and the Word." Understandably, his tone often came across as condescending, even if this was never his intention.

Over the past four years that I have been on SermonIndex, I have matured tremendously in my relationship with the Lord. I've also grown quite a bit in my understanding of the Scriptures. I've not only grown, but I have also changed my perspectives on certain issues. Some of the things that I was so convinced of are now not quite so convincing. However, this is NOT a bad thing. There have been things here on SermonIndex (both in the sermons and in the forums) that have caused me to "rethink" the validity of my own beliefs. This is never a problem for God. The Word encourages us to seek the truth in matters. Paul described this when he instructed the Thessalonians to "prove (or *test* everything)." We learn of men like the Bereans—who were commended as being "noble" for testing the very words of the Apostle Paul (who actually wrote 2/3s of the New Testament). Even Paul declared himself as not being above such examination when he instructed the Galatians, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that at which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

Do we encourage individuals to engage in Berean-style of research when we preach, teach or share? Do we encourage them to look up the facts on their own? Or are we so convinced of our own particular expertise that we don't feel that there is any research needed in this regard?

Have you ever heard the story of the young woman who kissed a frog that turned into a prince? There is a modern cliché that states, "Sometimes you have to kiss a lot of frogs in order to find your prince." This is reflective of the way some believers engage in matters regarding truth. They search for those things (sort of like kissing frogs) because they are searching for that one special frog that will validate their beliefs. This is not just true about the things that we find in the media or textbooks, but is also true about the Scriptures. My friend used to search the Scriptures diligently in order to find passages that validated his accepted beliefs. Can this happen? Have you ever noticed that for every hotly debated topic in the SermonIndex forums, both sides of an argument will present Scriptures that they feel seemingly validates their beliefs?

Iâ€™m certainly NOT advocating the *“kiss frogs to find your prince”* type of ideology. Rather, I suggest that those who do should take a really good look at the creature that youâ€™re calling a *“frog.”* In fact, the original Brothers Grimm version of the Frog Prince actually had the princess throwing the frog against the wall (she never puckered up). She was angry at her own immaturity which allowed herself to grow so close to a frog in the first place!

There is a very real danger of allowing ourselves to grow too close to a doctrine or belief that hasnâ€™t stood the test spoken of in I Thessalonians 5:21. Why should we waste time believing those things that havenâ€™t stood the test of unbiased truthfulness? In addition, there is a danger in dismissing a brother or sister simply in regard to a belief (or series of beliefs) of which differ from our own *“understanding”* of Scripture. How often have we dismissed someone as being *“immature”* or *“unwilling to hear the truth”* simply because his belief differed from our own?

Now, this is not to say that we should never refute certain gross inaccuracies from Scripture. There are certain doctrinal truths that are inarguable from Scripture. There are also things that we can reasonably conclude from the Scriptures. For instance, we can conclude that the Churches in the western world are not working properly and in terrible need of revival. While the causes for this condition are certainly debatable, it doesnâ€™t hide the obvious. This is no different from parents arriving home to find their two teenage sons standing in a mess that used to be a living room. Something happened that caused this mess â€” even if we arenâ€™t quite certain what it was (a party, a wrestling match, a burglar, etcâ€¦). All the parents know is that something went wrong. The same can be said of the western Church. Something somewhere went wrong, because the Church no longer resembles what it looked like in the Book of Acts. It is the obligation of the parents to uncover the truth. The final verdict of what went wrong must be based upon inarguable facts. Hebrews 6:1-2 actually includes a short list of those things that are a *“foundation”* for our beliefs. We are encouraged to know these things (considered *“milk”* at the end of Hebrews chapter 5) and *“go on to perfection”* (considered *“strong meat”* in 5:12-14).

The problem comes when people have their own idea of just *what* this *“strong meat”* consists of. Many believers who have known the Lord for sometime consider their own beliefs to be the *“strong meat”* mentioned here. But is it really? Have we tested our *“meat”* in order to determine that it is, in fact, *meat*? Are we certain that what we are feeding upon (and passing to others) is not something that looks like meat (i.e. spiritual *tofu*, etcâ€¦). In a day in which we need the protein from Godâ€™s Word (there are no spiritual vegetarians), we cannot survive on something that merely resembles meat. We need to test those things that we consume or provide to others. Does our *“doctrine”* truly stand up to such a test?

I suppose that on the surface, all of our doctrinal beliefs seem to be rooted in Scripture. Why would we believe something that isnâ€™t completely confirmed by a preponderance of Scripture? If this is true, then why are there so many disagreements in the Body of Christ â€” even amongst revival seeking believers? A person like the friend that I mentioned would immediately suppose that the problem is that most people have not studied or come to the *“truth”* like he has. This causes an *“I stand with God on the truth”* type of attitude where the thoughts, opinions and questioning of anyone else are prematurely dismissed. Do you see the problem with this sort of thinking? The friend that I mentioned claims to be gifted with the I Corinthians chapter 12 *“gift of knowledge.”* He feels *“persecuted”* by those who disagree with him as those who do not understand or acknowledge his *“gift.”*

Do you see the problems associated with the tone by which our posts can come across? How often are we quick to speak in regard to things in which we feel to be *“experts?”* Is it not better to be *“swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath”* (James 1:19)? Why? *“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”* (James 1:20). In other words, we shouldnâ€™t *“talk too much.”* This can be really difficult if we see something in which we feel a need to say something. So when and why should we speak? In Chapter 3, James speaks about the difficulties with *“taming the tongue.”* He speaks about how dangerous an untamed tongue can be. In the end, James says:

Quote:

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.
14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.
17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

- James 3:13-18

While God expects that we preach the truth of the Word of God with boldness, He also expects us to be “peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits....” How does this contrast with the tone of our conversations? Do we fight in order to make our point? God has been dealing with me (personally) about the need to refrain from such conflict. Yes, I can still point out something in which I feel needs to be said (in total love and humility). But I should simply “let my yes be yes and my no be no” (Matthew 5:37). In discussions of Biblical doctrine or other matters (such as standards of “holiness,” conduct or even controversial issues), we should present our belief and then move over to allow the Lord to lead a person to the truth of a matter. We should avoid any sort of squabbling.

Is this how we want the world to view us (particularly since we are Christ’s Ambassadors to this dark world)? I remember hearing David Wilkerson preach once about a divisive woman who left a Church across town because “God led her” to Times Square Church. Immediately after hearing this woman issue complaint and complaint about the doctrine and attitudes of those from her former congregation “who would not hear the truth,” Wilkerson told some of the other Church leaders to be cautious about this woman. He warned that it might only be a matter of time before this woman found a certain clique of loud, divisive believers within the TSC congregation who act and behave the same way. In his message, David Wilkerson said that it wasn’t a short time before he saw these individuals sitting together. It wasn’t long after that in which these individuals had to be reproached for creating division through their “sanctified gossip” in regard to “violations of doctrinal truth” that they supposed was occurring. As expected, these individuals left the congregation (wiping the dust from their feet) and acting as if they were being “persecuted for righteousness.” A friend who heard this particular message commented that these people are probably out frequenting another congregation doing the same. How sad!

Is this our goal of our conversations? Should we engage in such conflicting speech? Are we profiting the Kingdom of God by forcing those things that we suppose to be truth upon our listeners? Are we helping others by the manner in which we belittle those things that others hold true?

I have been considering these things recently. I don’t ever want to come across like my zealous friend. While I still consider him as a dear brother, he really doesn’t hold the respect of many people. I have no doubt that we should stand for truth. But I feel that my heart has been distracted by conflict rather than a desire to bring honor and glory to the Lord. I feel that it would be better sometimes to remain silent than to comment on certain matters. I’ve been thinking so much about praying BEFORE I speak (or in this case, make a comment). This has usually been the case in my years at SermonIndex. Yet, try as I may, I still engage in conversation from time to time in which I am forced to repent. It isn’t that I necessarily repent for *what* I said – but for the manner in which I spoke. I should stand up for what I feel to be true (or against a violation of what I feel to be true). But I should never do so at the expense of another.

With this, I plan on avoiding any conversations that might prove unfruitful. Sometimes, it is best to walk away from a conflict. At other times, it might be better to speak about a concern in private rather than in a public forum. There are a great many individuals who might visit this website. Should we not live and speak as if we are “living epistles?” Are we producing death or life in our conversations? Are we presenting rumors, allegations and insinuations, or are we compelled to differentiate between pure, unadulterated truth and anything else? Are we proud in our knowledge and speech? Are we a “dripping faucet” of impure words and insinuations? Do we consider others before ourselves? Are we peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy? With God’s grace and with His guidance, we can be a faithful witness to the goodness and pure truthfulness of our Lord.

:-)

problems associated with the tone by which our posts can come across - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2008/11/27 13:2

Dear Brother,

Your latest post should be a monthly *must read.*

Thank you and Praise the Lord for moving you to post it.

Marvelous isn't it? How the past events in our lives serve to teach God's truth if we will only take the time to reflect upon them in light of His Word.

Kind regards,
white stone

We lose the benefit of what we read for want of meditation.

Re: problems associated with the tone by which our posts can come across, on: 2008/12/2 2:43

iron sharpening iron has to be a good thing though. No?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/12/2 3:09

Quote:

-----iron sharpening iron has to be a good thing though. No?

Debating, Arguing, and trying to convince people mentally of theological positions brings strife, envy, and every evil work. This wisdom James says comes from below. We must realize that we can give our flesh authority by mis-quoting bible verses. There is a great need for humility, teachableness, meekness, gentleness in the body of Christ and in discussion forums such as this on sermonindex.net

I want to write as one that will bear account for His words before the God who is all seeing and knowing. Judging the motives, intentions and spirit behind our words.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/12/2 9:27

I praise God for the original article that was posted, and for the words of wisdom from our brother Chris.

I am truly sorry for everytime I have searched the scriptures in these threads in order to validate my own beliefs instead of being open to the Holy Spirit to receive the truth from brothers and sisters that saw things in a different light.

We can be on the right side scripturally on a issue and have a wrong spirit. Some of the most zealous saints for truth come across with a critical spirit.

May the Lord help us to contend earnestly for the faith, speaking the truth in love, esteeming our brothers and sisters more highly than ourselves.

Mike

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/12/2 9:45

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (James 1:19,20)

Re: - posted by paulamicela (), on: 2008/12/2 12:08

Excellent! A much-needed article!

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle..."

-Paul

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2008/12/2 13:25

I believe this a great goal 'to leave peaceably with all men' (Romans 12:18). It is a challenge for us as sinful humans, when it comes to discussing topics which we feel passionately about (It sure is for me!). It's so easy for us to cling to our position, and not to look impartially at the points which someone else is presenting, if they run contrary to our position.

On issues which are controversial, if they can be discussed in a way which maintains 'the bonds of peace', then I feel it is not a problem to discuss them. But if in discussing them, my words and attitudes convey a lack of love and respect for my brother or sister, Christ's 'law of love' would tell me I need to abandon the discussion. Under God's rulership, not only will the lion and lamb lie down with one another some day...but you could say the Whitefield and the Wesley, will also dwell together in peace ;~)

One thing I had been meaning to comment on earlier, was how much I appreciated the tone of the discussion in one particular thread on this forum. It had to do with whether or not Christians should drink alcohol. Although the participants expressed varied opinions on this subject, throughout the discussion there was a warm, Christian atmosphere maintained by the thread participants.

This sort of thing seems like a 'touch of revival':~)

Love to all my brothers and sisters in Christ!
In Jesus,
John

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/12/2 18:04

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2Timothy 2:23-26)

Re: , on: 2008/12/18 2:44

Iron sharpens iron though bro

Re: - posted by ravenmolehil, on: 2008/12/18 11:48

just bumping to push self promoting thread off the main page! anyone else care to JOIN IN

Re: - posted by Lonny (), on: 2008/12/18 17:24

The sermon as the start was helpful in one point in particular - that we will all have disagreements at some point or another and over one subject or another - now add the Bible into that mix and watch the flames go!! However in the light of that (and in the reformed tradition from which I spring) it would appear to me that as Protestants we are the worst when it comes to arguments - the second someone says something we don't like it is far too easy to get offended, take the moral high ground, get offensive and if we are really upset then jump ship to the next church. Of course that wasn't possible pre-reformation and I think it is something we have lost in taking the steps that were (rightly) taken at that time. We need to rediscover the sense of "One Lord, One Faith and One Church" and the maturity that such a view demands from us in being able to disagree with one another and still all face the same direction serving our God.

Ravenmolehill as far as your comments go in the light of the original sermon - a pretty poor show and little more than bullying.

Re: - posted by Lonny (), on: 2008/12/19 3:34

Also the Bible is quite real about disagreements - Peter to Paul, Paul and Barnabus, Peter/Paul and the Judiasers. Now that's real - where those disagreements always held in the manner that Jesus would have wanted...hmmm not so sure? Early church history is pretty sharp and all the more because people believed that what they were arguing was so important that it was worth falling out over - There's is a challenge in that to us today:

- a.) If we aren't getting passionate about our Bible then why not ? is our faith so old or wet that we no longer sharpen each other?
- b.) If something is worth falling out over then surely it is also how we respond to that falling out that makes is Christian a Iso...It isn't always about avoidance... :-)

Re: - posted by ravenmolehil, on: 2008/12/19 8:56

"Ravenmolehill as far as your comments go in the light of the original sermon - a pretty poor show and little more than bullying."

I knew this would get taken out of context...

It was not directed at the sermon or the content of this particular thread, It was a statement based toward another thread yesterday, to use the initial content of this thread to combat it. (It was a shameless attempt to redirect SI traffic toward their personal website, I will not go into much detail to avoid bringing back up) You had to be there...

I don't weight in on many topics, folks that have been around here for a while know that I usually post ref. material... but not my own..

for ex.) christianaudio.com having a free mp3 download of Spurgeon's Morning & Evening thru DEC :-)

(I should have just copied and pasted from this thread over to the other thread)

Re: - posted by moose34, on: 2009/1/22 4:44

2Timothy 2:23-26)