

Articles and Sermons :: Distraction of Annoyance ~ Oswald Chambers

Distraction of Annoyance ~ Oswald Chambers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/4 23:35

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. (﻿Psalm 123:3-4﻿)

The thing to heed is not so much damage to our faith in God as damage to our temper of mind. Â“﻿Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously﻿Â” (﻿Malachi 2:16﻿). The temper of mind if it is not right with God is tremendous in its effects, it is the enemy that penetrates right into the soul and distracts us from God. There are certain tempers of mind we never dare indulge in; if we do, we find that they distract us from God, and until we get back into the quiet mood before God our faith in Him is nil and our confidence in human ingenuity the thing that rules.

Spiritual leakage comes not so much through trouble on the outside as through imagining you have Â“﻿screwed yourself a bit too high.﻿Â” For instance, you came to a particular crisis and made a conscientious stand for God and had the witness of the Spirit that everything was all right; but the weeks have gone by, and the months, and you are slowly beginning to come to the conclusion that you had been taking a stand a bit too high. Your friends come and say, Â“﻿Now don't be a fool, you are only an ordinary human being; when you talked about this spiritual awakening we knew it was only a passing phase; you can't keep up the strain, God does not expect you to﻿Â”; and you say, Â“﻿Well, I suppose I was a bit too pretentious.﻿Â” It sounds wise and sensible, but the danger is that you do not rely on God any longer; reliance on worldly opinion has taken the place of reliance on God. We have to realise that no effort can be too high, because Jesus says we are to be ﻿the children of our Father in heaven.﻿ It must be my utmost for His highest all the time and every time.

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Â“﻿Have mercy upon us, O Lord, . . . for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.﻿Â”﻿ As God's children we have to see that we keep looking in the face of God, otherwise we shall find our souls in the condition of being filled with contempt and annoyance, with the result that we are spiritually distracted instead of spiritually self-possessed. This is true in individual circumstances as well as national crises. It is not always the cross mood that leads to the cross speech, but the cross word that makes the cross mood. If in the morning you begin to talk crossly, before long you will feel desperately cross. Take to God the things that perturb your spirit. You notice that certain people are not going on spiritually and you begin to feel perturbed; if the discernment turns you to intercession, it is good; but if it turns to criticism it blocks you in your way to God. God never gives us discernment of what is wrong for us to criticise it, but that we might intercede.

Â“﻿Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes﻿Â” (﻿Psalm 123:1﻿). The terrible thing is that we are likely to get to the place where we do not miss the consciousness of God's presence; we have gone on so long ignoring the lifting up of our eyes to Him that it has become the habit of our mind and it never bothers us. We go on depending on our own wits and ingenuity until suddenly God brings us to a halt and we realise how we have been losing out. Whenever there is spiritual leakage, remedy it immediately. It does not matter what you are doing, stop instantly when there is the realisation that you are losing out before God; lift up your eyes to Him and tell Him you recognise it—Â“﻿Lord, this thing has been coming in between my spirit and Thee, I am not resting in faith.﻿Â” Get it readjusted at once. There is always a suitable place to pray, to lift up your eyes to God; there is no need to get to a place of prayer, pray wherever you are. Confess before God that you have been distracted away from faith in Him; don't vindicate yourself. The lust of vindication is a state of mind that destroys the soul's faith in God—Â“﻿I must explain myself﻿Â”; Â“﻿I must get people to understand.﻿Â” The remarkable thing about our Lord is that He never explained anything to anybody. Nothing ever distracted Him out of His oneness with God, and He prays ﻿Â“﻿that they may be one, even as We are one.﻿Â”﻿

Oswald Chambers

Distraction of Annoyance ~ Oswald Chambers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/5 13:14

Irresponsibility

Every Christian worker has to decide this question, viz. Is Jesus Christ's mind infallible, or is the modern Western mind infallible? The tendency abroad to-day is to think ourselves infallible, and the Bible a jumble up of the most extraordinary stuff, good stuff, but we cannot be expected to accept all its views. That means, we believe ourselves more likely to be infallible than Jesus Christ. We would repudiate this statement if made baldly, but we all act as if it were true, we all take for granted that Jesus Christ's teachings are nonsense; we treat them with respect and reverence, but we do not do anything else with them, we do not carry them out.

For the past three hundred years men have been pointing out how similar Jesus Christ's teachings are to other good teachings. We have to remember that Christianity, if it is not a supernatural miracle, is a sham.

1. This Life's Use Wasted

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36)

The most literal meaning of losing one's life is, of course, dying by accident; . . . if a man loses his life by accident, what is the whole world to him?

Stalker;

Jesus says that life is the opportunity God gives to man to do his life work; that means that God has no respect whatever for our programmes and machinery. Our Lord insists on one thing only, God's purpose for Him; He pays not the remotest attention to civilised forces, He estimates nothing but one standard. According to our standards He was idle; for three years He walked about saying things. It is only by putting these violent contrasts before our minds that we understand how different our Lord's standpoint to life is compared with ours. We bend the whole energy of our lives to machinery, and when an accident happens and the machinery breaks up we say, What a disaster. Probably it was the emancipation of the man's life. We make nests here and there, competences here and there, but God has no respect for any of them; at any minute He may send a wind and over goes the whole thing. The one thing God is after is character.

Not only has the Creator appointed to every human being, in the constitution of his manhood, a certain stature to which he may and ought to attain; but He has appointed a corresponding task for him to fulfil, determined by the providential circumstances in which he is placed. In fact, this is his life; and not to fulfil this God-appointed purpose of his existence is to lose his life.

Stalker;

It is along these fundamental lines that we understand why the Bible says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"; why Solomon said, "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions"; and why he further said, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding"; and why our Lord said, "Let not your heart be troubled." The characteristic of a man who is not based on the issue of his life is an incessant cunning, crafty, commercial worry. Our Lord was absolutely devoid of that. What we call responsibility our Lord never had, and what He called responsibility men are without. Men do not care a bit for Jesus Christ's notion of their lives, and Jesus does not care for our notions. There is the antagonism. If we were to estimate ourselves from our Lord's standpoint, very few of us would be considered disciples.

This idea lay near to the heart of Jesus, first of all, in relation to Himself. He thoroughly realised, from first to last, that He had a work to do, so accurately arranged and fitted to the length of His life that every hour had its own part of the whole to clear off, and He was not allowed either to anticipate or lag behind.

Stalker;

To-day we hold conferences and conventions and give reports and make our programmes. None of these things were in the life of Jesus, and yet every minute of His life He realised that He was fulfilling the purpose of His Father (e.g. John 9:4). How did He do it? By maintaining the one relationship, and it is that one relationship He insists on in His disciples, and it is the one we have lost in the rubbish of modern civilisation. If we try and live the life Jesus Christ lived, modern civilisation will fling us out like waste material; we are no good, we do not add anything to the hard cash of the times we live in, and the sooner we are flung out the better.

In St. John's Gospel this aspect of our Lord's life is more elaborately worked out than anywhere else. It is indicated in the other Gospels (see Luke 2:49; 13:32; 12:50). Jesus knew He was here for His Father's purpose and He never allowed the cares of civilisation to bother Him. He did nothing to add to the wealth of the civilisation in which He lived, He earned nothing, modern civilisation would not have tolerated Him for two minutes.

It will be remembered how frequently He represented this life as a trust or stewardship
Stalker;

In our Lord's mind any created thing which fails in making anything of its purpose is contemptible. (See Luke 13:6-9) Jesus' attitude to Roman and Grecian civilisation was one of superb contempt. Our attitude to Greece and Rome is one of un-bonneted reverence, with not so much as the cast of an eye for Jesus Christ. Our Lord followed life from His Father's standpoint, to-day we are caught up in the shows of things. Take the Bible attitude to men on the whole, civilisations are despatched at a minute's notice, armies come together and annihilate one another and God seems to pay no attention. His attitude is one which makes us blaspheme and say that He does not care an atom for human beings. Jesus Christ says He does, He says He is a Father; and that He, Jesus, is exactly like His Father. The point is that Jesus saw life from God's standpoint, we don't. We won't accept the responsibility of life as God gives it to us, we only accept responsibility as we wish to take it, and the responsibility we wish to take is to save our own skins, make comfortable positions for ourselves and those we are related to, exert ourselves a little to keep ourselves clean and vigorous and upright; but when it comes to following out what Jesus says, His sayings are nothing but jargon. We name the Name of Christ but we are not based on His one issue of life, and Jesus says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and he can easily do it—and lose his own soul?"

Oswald Chambers

Re: Distraction of Annoyance ~ Oswald Chambers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/5 21:38

2. This Soul's Way Missed

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:37)

The attitude of our Lord's mind is this, that the eternal condition of a man's spirit is determined by his soul life in this order of things.

The loss of oneself in missing one's opportunities of moral and spiritual development . . . may end in the loss of the "soul" in the awful sense of being cast away for ever. On this solemn subject the teaching of our Lord is extraordinarily copious; indeed, it is to Him that the popular conceptions about a Day of Judgment and the retributions of a future existence are due.
Stalker;

The modern Christian laughs at the idea of a final judgment. That shows how far we can stray away if we imbibe the idea that the modern mind is infallible and not our Lord. To His mind at least the finality of moral decision is reached in this life. There is no aspect of our Lord's mind that the modern mind detests so fundamentally as this one. It does not suit us in any shape or form. The average modern mind reads such passages as Luke 16:23-24 and says our Lord was only using figurative language. If the picture is so dreadful figuratively, what must the reality be like? The things our Lord talks about are either arrant nonsense or they are a revelation of things that the common sense of man can never guess. The attitude of Jesus is outside our standards in every way. We must face the music nowadays as we have never faced it. Christianity is a complete sham or a supernatural miracle from beginning to end; immediately we admit it is a miracle we are responsible for walking in the light; of what we know Jesus Christ to be.

To our Lord's mind the definiteness of the finality of punishment was as clear as could be, and nothing but lack of intelligence ever makes us say He did not put it in that way, and if those of us who take Him to be Lord and Master, take Him to mean what He says, where ought we to be in regard to these questions? The majority of us are apologetic about the teachings of Jesus, we are much too easily cowed by modern good taste. The modern mind is the infallible god to the majority of us. A man like Blatchford, who simply puts Jesus Christ on one side, is in a much more wholesome state. It is far better to do that than accept Jesus and leave out what we don't like. That is to be a traitor and a deserter.

The parables in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew are three aspects of the Divine estimate of life. Bewa

re of being an ingenious interpreter. You will always find at the basis of our Lord's parables and illustrations a fundamental consistency to His revelation.

The parable of the ten virgins; reveals that it is fatal from our Lord's standpoint to live this life without preparation for the life to come. That is not the exegesis, it is the obvious underlying principle.

The parable of the talents is our Lord's statement with regard to the danger of leaving undone the work of a lifetime.

And the description of the last judgment; is the picture of genuine astonishment on the part of both the losers and the gainers of what they had never once thought about.

To be accustomed to our Lord's teaching is not to ask, "What must I do to be good?" but, "What must I do to be saved?" How long does it take us to know what the true meaning of our life is? One half second.

*Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure tho' seldom, are denied us
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.
There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honours perish
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a life-time
That away the rest have trifled.*

There never was anyone who did not have one moment when all the machinery tumbled away and he saw the meaning of his life. God pays not the remotest attention to our civilised cultures and our attitude to things, because that is not what we are here for. We are here for one thing—to glorify God. That is where we join issue with the Lord Jesus Christ today, and we look at every other thing as life—“What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where withal shall we be clothed?” Our Lord came for one purpose only, to reveal God, and to get men to be spiritually real.

If we would have the blunt courage of ordinary human beings and face the teachings of Jesus, we would have to come to one of two conclusions—either the conclusion His contemporaries came to, that He was devil-possessed; or else to the conclusion the disciples came to, that He is God Incarnate; Jesus Christ will not water down His teaching to suit our weakness in any shape or form; He will not allow us to cringe in the tiniest degree. Whenever there is a trace of cringing or whining, or wanting something different from what He wants, it is the stern front of the Son of God uncloaking sin every time we look at Him; but if we come as paupers, what happens? Exactly the opposite. He will lift us up and wash us whiter than snow; and put the Holy Ghost in us and place us before the Throne of God; undeserving of censure; by the sheer omnipotence of His Atonement.

What we have to get hold of in our moral lives is that Jesus Christ demands that we live His holy life out naturally. Despair is always the gateway of faith. “If Thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth” (rv). So many of us get depressed about ourselves, but when we get to the point where we are not only sick of ourselves, but sick to death, then we shall understand what the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ means. It will mean that we come to Him without the slightest pretence, without any hypocrisy, and say, “Lord, if You can make anything of me, do it,” and He will do it. The Lord can never make a saint out of a good man, He can only make a saint out of three classes of people—the godless man, the weak man, and the sinful man, and no one else, and the marvel of the Gospel of God's grace is that Jesus Christ can make us naturally what He wants us to be.

Oswald Chambers

Re: The Base Impulse - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/9 9:45

*But, ah, through all men some base impulse runs
The brute the father, and the men the sons
Which if one harshly sets himself to subdue,
With fiercer indolence it boils anew,
He ends the worst who with best hopes began,
How hard is this, how like the lot of man!*

Experimentally the meaning of life is to attain the excellency of a broken heart, for that alone entails repentance and acceptance, the two great poles of Bible revelation. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;—why, we do not know, but God has made it so. The one thing we are after is to avoid getting broken-hearted.

The base impulse revealed itself in the time of our Lord in three great types of sin—the sin of the publicans, the sin of the Pharisees and the sin of the Sadducees.

In every country there is a lost class, a class that has given way to the sins of the flesh till its sin can no longer be concealed. What others do by stealth, they do openly. Such a class existed in our Lord's day in Palestine, and the popular names for them in that day were publicans and sinners; or publicans and harlots; or the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . The attitude of Jesus to this class was one of the most singular and characteristic features of His career, and, when fully understood, reveals more clearly perhaps than any other circumstance the secret of His mission.

Stalker;

It is remarkable how little Jesus directed His speech against carnal and public sins, though He showed plenty of prophetic indignation against the sins of a wholly different class, He preached His grandest sermon to a bad, ignorant woman (& John 4:10-14); and one of His most prominent disciples was a publican named Matthew. The one man He ever said He wanted to stay with was another publican called Zaccheus; and some of the most faithless things He said were in connection with a notoriously bad woman (& Luke 7:36-50). It is along this line that we can understand why the Pharisees were sick to the heart and disgusted with Jesus Christ, why they called Him "a friend of publicans and sinners!" We would have done exactly the same to-day in spite of all our religious sentiments. We gloss over our Lord's actions with our civilised conceptions and destroy the meaning of His Gospel.

Our Lord's conduct was not due to any insensibility to the wickedness of open and carnal sins, nor that He was lenient to those sins: He drew near to those sins to make them for ever impossible in the lives of those guilty of them. Jesus roused the conscience of the very worst of them by presenting the highest good. We are apt to forget that our Lord's parables in & Luke 15 say just what they do. Never take the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke as an exposition of the Gospel first; it is our Lord's apologia; He is explaining to the Pharisees why He is here.

1. The Pharisaic Invincibility

In interpreting our Lord's teaching, watch carefully who He is talking to; the parable of the prodigal son was a stinging lash to the Pharisees. We need to be reminded of the presentation of Jesus in the New Testament for the Being pictured to us nowadays would not perturb anybody; but He aroused His whole nation to rage. Read the records of His ministry and see how much blazing indignation there is in it. For thirty years Jesus did nothing, then for three years He stormed every time He went down to Jerusalem. Josephus says He tore through the Temple courts like a madman. We hear nothing about that Jesus Christ to-day. The meek and mild Being pictured to-day makes us lose altogether the meaning of the Cross. We have to find out why Jesus was beside Himself with rage and indignation at the Pharisees and not with those given over to carnal sins. Which state of society is going to stand a ripping and tearing Being like Jesus Christ Who drags to the ground the highest respected pillars of its civilised society, and shows that their respectability and religiosity is built on a much more abominable pride than the harlot's or the publican's? The latter are disgusting and coarse, but these men have the very pride of the devil in their hearts.

Ask yourself, then, what is it that awakens indignation in your heart? Is it the same kind of thing that awakened indignation in Jesus Christ? The thing that awakens indignation in us is the thing that upsets our present state of comfort and society. The thing that made Jesus Christ blaze was pride that defied God and prevented Him from having His right with human hearts. Sin is the independence of human nature which God created turning against God. Holiness is this same ind

dependence turning against sin. Sin is not doing wrong things, it is wrong being. Sins are wrong acts: sin is an independence that will not bow its neck to God, that defies God and all He presents, that will not go to the excellency of a broken heart. It is that class who stand for independence in art and culture; it is not for them a question of right or wrong, but of pleasing the senses. The greatest pillars of art and culture are erected on these lines and Jesus Christ pulls down the whole temple, because we cannot build temples of art on this earth at all; they will be built in heaven when the foundations are pure. The refinements of art and culture are all in opposition to the tumbling in crisis of God in the Incarnation.

(Cont.)

Oswald Chambers

Re: The Base Impulse continued... - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/12 23:01

2. The Pride of Integrity

The conspicuous point of view in which the Pharisees always figure in the Gospels is incapable of repentance. Self-knowledge is the first condition of repentance. Watch Jesus Christ whenever there is the tiniest sign of repentance, He is the incarnation of forgiving and forgetting, and He says that is God's nature. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Remember, that kind of statement hits the Pharisees to the very core of their being. Could they listen patiently to a Man like that? Jesus was killed for His words, He would not have been crucified if He had kept quiet. It was the ruthless way He went straight to the very root of Pharisaism that enraged them until they became the devil incarnate and crucified the Son of God. Calvary means the place of a skull; and that is where our Lord is always crucified, in the culture and intellect of men who will not have self-knowledge given by the light of Jesus Christ.

3. Sensible Rationalism

The Sadducee is the type of person who in all ages destroys the treasure of the spirit; he is a common-sense individual.

There are some people to whom it is never safe to show any valued possession. . . . Now and then someone with the bump of destruction will push his way into our holy of holies, and deface what he considers our idols and leave us sad. . . . Unfold a scheme, a dream, a theory, a long-cherished recollection within the reach of a man who loves destruction, and he will reduce it to nothing. Even a book, that treasure which stands half-way between the tangible and the intangible, is not safe with him, he will turn its pages into ridicule, and give it back with half its charm destroyed.

Thomas Carlyle; utterly destroyed the early faith of his wife and never gave her anything in its stead, and Mrs. Carlyle's letters, gifted with the most amazing literary ability and mentality, are wilted and sad, like her face, because he destroyed in the true spirit of the Sadducee her holy of holies and gave her nothing in its place. This line of thought makes us understand our Lord's attitude to the Sadducees, and why He said, "Don't cast your pearls before swine." There are some things we must never show to anyone. Like children, we all think that we ought to show our cherished possessions, we ought not; there are Sadducees everywhere. You rarely find them people of uncouth speech, but rather the opposite.

We have all met people who act like an east wind, our mental horizon gets lower and we feel unmitigatedly mean and despicable. When Jesus Christ came near men, He convicted them of sin, but He convicted them also of this, that they could be like He was if they would only come to Him.

The Sadducees were the anti-Pharisaic party, and they went as far in believing too little as the Pharisees in the direction of believing too much. They were the sceptical religious party. Their beliefs lacked warmth and conviction. The weakness of the religious sentiment in them was partly the cause and partly the effect of another characteristic, viz. worldliness. The spiritual and eternal stirred them but faintly, consequently they had a more tenacious hold on the concerns of this present life.

Stalker

Watch the difference between the faces marred by sin and those marred by coming in contact with the Sadducees, who have all their inner shrines destroyed and nothing given in their place; the latter give a look of withered, mean,

sanity. Sin does not produce it, it is the effect of the presence of this monster—the rational, healthy-minded Sadducee; this “monster” has been inside the Christian Church for the past twenty centuries, and it is one of the problems that has to be faced. There are comparatively few Pharisees to-day, the greater number are Sadducees, who back up their little bits of common sense against all that Jesus Christ said and against everything anyone says who has had a vision of things differing from common sense.

4. Sensible Ruling

The Sadducees were the ruling class and the priestly party from the date of the Babylonian exile. Such priests have continually emerged in the affairs of God, and they are much more interested in the affairs of the visible world and but faintly tinged with the hope or spirit of the world invisible.

Stalker

This is the type that perfectly exhibits the Sadducee of our Lord's day. It is not the brutal sceptic who is the Sadducee, he does not destroy anybody's shrines, it is the religious man or woman with particularly bright conceptions of their own, but who are far more concerned with the visible success of this world than with anything else. You go to them with some insurgent doubt in your mind, and they smile at you, and say, “Oh, don't exercise your mind on those things, it is absurd.” That is the Sadducee who has done more to deface in modern life what Jesus Christ began to do than all the blackguardism and drunkenness in our modern civilisation. The subtle destruction of all that stands for the invisible is what is represented by the Sadducee.

It is necessary to get the historical atmosphere and setting of our Lord's life in order to understand the historical exegesis of His teaching. Most of us only know the spiritual exegesis, we come with our spiritual illumination and take incidents out of the Bible—“I don't care about their historic exegesis, I simply take them as expressing my own spiritual condition.” That is not the thing for a student to do; a student has to rightly divide the word of truth, and to find out the historic background of Jesus Christ's teaching.

In Luke 16:19-31 we get a good picture of our Lord's attitude to the Sadducees. The rich man

lived to dine and to wear sumptuous clothing, neither bestowing on the poor any generosity commensurate with his means nor remembering that he was an heir of eternity, and herein is the great moral principle, viz. that of not doing being as guilty as doing, and that the Judge will accept no excuse for a life not marked by unselfishness up to the means of its opportunity.

Stalker

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If we know that we have received the unmerited favour of God and we do not give unmerited favour to other people, we are damned in that degree. The best and most spiritual people to-day turn Jesus Christ's teaching out of court. They say He could never have meant what He said, and, we have to use common sense. If we apply common sense we run the risk of being Sadducees. What common sense person would carry out the Sermon on the Mount? It is the Sadducee who withers up the true spirit of devotion to God in our life by a “squirt” of common sense, because the common sense comes from a background of infidelity against God's rule. We are measured by what we do according to what we have. Some people only give to the deserving, because they imagine they deserve all they have. Our Lord says, “Give, not because they deserve it, but because I tell you to.

Jesus reveals in the parable of the rich man (Luke 12:16-21) that his mind and heart have been entirely absorbed with property. About his soul and eternity he has manifested no concern, he heaped up treasure but was not rich towards God.

Stalker

Treasure in heaven is the wealth of character that has been earned by standing true to the faith of Jesus, not to the faith in Jesus. Our Lord's advice to the rich young ruler was, “Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me.” That is, have faith for the things Jesus Christ stood for, and anybody who is fool enough to conduct his life with Jesus Christ as absolute Master will realise what Jesus said, “Men shall . . . separate you from their company . . . and cast out your name as evil.” Many of us are saved by the skin of our teeth, we are comfortably settled for heaven, that

is all we care for, now we can make a pile on earth. There are plenty of people who give their testimony all right in meetings, but they are Sadducees to the backbone.

The cynicism of the official who feared not God nor regarded man, administered justice in our Lord's instance from mere annoyance. For him justice had no majesty and the misfortune of the widow had no sacredness. That which he could not be got to do, either for the fear of God or out of regard to man, he yet hastened to do merely to save himself from annoyance; and this is a thoroughly Sadducean trait.

Stalker
(See Luke 18:1-8)

The spirit of "I do not wish to be annoyed" is frequently the inspiration of the administration of justice in private cases. It works into our intercession also: I want that bad person saved—because he is of so much value in the sight of God? No, because he is an annoyance to me, I cannot live my life properly with him. That spirit cannot live anywhere near Jesus Christ, because Jesus had only one point of view—His Father's will.

In any work I do for God is my motive loyalty to Jesus, or do I have to stop and wonder where He comes in? If I work for God because I know it brings me the good opinion of those whose good opinion I wish to have, I am a Sadducee. The one great thing is to maintain a spiritual life which is absolutely true to Jesus Christ and to the faith of Jesus Christ.

(Cont.)

Oswald Chambers

***Thomas Carlyle** (1795-1881) was a Scottish-born literary figure in nineteenth-century England, a writer, biographer, essayist, historian, and critic.

***mean:** ordinary, common, low, or ignoble, rather than cruel or spiteful

The Base Impulse ~ Concluded - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/14 9:14

(Continued)

Lord, Lord, when we are dead, remember not All our lost sorrows and our soul's endeavour, Better to bear the burden of our lot, Firmer to stand how strong the storm so-ever, Only remember all the agony Thou bearest in the Garden silently.

And when the soul by death is freed again, Thou wilt not let the rapture of her wings Be marred by memory of this life's pain, But lift our hearts above our sufferings. Lord, let our soul's life after all these years Rise stronger, wiser, cleaner for its tears.

1. The Low Man with a Little Thing to Do

The base impulse is the way sin works into our minds and gives us a totally wrong view of God. If the base impulse does not show itself in flesh and blood sins, it will show itself in mean-mindedness. Try and imagine what Jesus meant when He said, "Preach the gospel to every creature"; He keeps "an open house" for the whole universe. It is a conception impossible of human comprehension.

(a) Moral Distinctions

We are interested in other men's lives because of a career, a profession, or an ideal we have for them, but God does not seem to care an atom for careers or professions, He comes down with ruthless disregard of all gifts and geniuses and sweeps them on one side; He is interested only in one thing, and that thing was exhibited in the life of our Lord, viz. a balanced holiness before God. Our Lord's character is the full-orbed expression of God's ideal of a man. We can never take any one virtue and say Jesus Christ was the representative of that virtue; we cannot speak of Jesus Christ being a holy Man or a great Man or a good Man; Jesus Christ cannot be summed up in terms of natural virtues, but only in terms of the supernatural. If we can describe a man by any one virtue, he ceases to be God's idea of a man, and the character

eristic of the Spirit of God in us is that He brings us ﻿Å“﻿unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.﻿Å”﻿

(b) Money Matters and the Master’s Mind

Money is the sign and symbol of all earthly possessions; it is earthly pleasure in a solid condition, only requiring to be melted to assume any of its more volatile and usable forms; and the pursuit of it easily becomes an absorbing passion even with those who have forgotten how to turn it into these equivalents. On this subject the language of Jesus is astonishingly severe.

Stalker﻿

Jesus saw in money a much more formidable enemy of the Kingdom of God than we are apt to recognise it to be. Money is one of the touchstones of reality. People say, Å“﻿We must lay up for a rainy day.﻿Å” We must, if we do not know God. How many of us are willing to go the length of Jesus Christ’s teaching? Ask yourself, how does the advocacy of insurance agree with the Sermon on the Mount, and you will soon see how un-Christian we are in spite of all our Christian jargon. The more we try to reconcile modern principles of economy with the teachings of Jesus, the more we shall have to disregard Jesus. Whenever we read anything that is very plain in our Lord’s words, we either say that we cannot understand it or that it has another meaning. Common sense is the best gift we have, but it must be under the dominant rule of God. We enthrone common sense, we do not enthrone God. Men must reason according to their god, and the god of to-day is common sense; that is why Jesus Christ’s teaching is ruled out of court. If we try and apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to ordinary business life to-day, we shall see where we are. ﻿Civilisation was founded by a murderer﻿; and the very soul and genius of civilisation is competition. What we are trying to do to-day is to Christianise civilisation, and our social problems exist because Jesus Christ’s teaching is being ruled out.

2. The High Man with a Great Thing to Do

Profound as is His sense of the wickedness of the world and the lostness of the individual, the ground-tone of His preaching is not despair, but hope; and the final and enduring impression left on the mind by the prolonged and sympathetic study of all His words is, that there is an essence of divine dignity and immeasurable value, which it is the task of the Saviour and of all who are inspired with His aims to rescue from the dangers to which it is exposed and to redeem to a destiny of blessedness and immortality.

Stalker

(a) Solidarity of Sin

Solidarity means oneness of interest. We are familiar with the phrase Å“﻿the solidarity of the human race,﻿Å” but there is also a solidarity of sin (a oneness of interest in sin), and a solidarity of salvation (a oneness of interest in salvation). I mean by sin, not sin in a particular sense, but in the great big general sense which means a violation or neglect of the laws of morality or religion, and God’s Book shows that there is a oneness of interest in all sin. The Psalms show a wonderful discrimination about sin (e.g. ﻿Psalms 32, 51﻿); they refer to the same thing the Apostle Paul refers to in ﻿Ephesians 6:12﻿; the supernatural inspiration of sin.

We have considered the three great sins of our Lord’s day—the sin of the publican, of the Pharisee, and of the Sadducee, and now we must look to the fact that our Lord considered men as evil. Å“﻿If ye then, being evil . . .﻿Å” (﻿Luke 11:13﻿). Jesus Christ is made to teach the opposite of this by modern teachers; they make out that He taught the goodness of human nature. Jesus Christ revealed that men were evil, and that He came that He might plant in them the very nature that was in Himself. He cannot, however, begin to do this until a man recognises himself as Jesus sees him,

We start with the idea that some people are good and some bad; but we are all bad, everyone of us needs saving by Jesus Christ. Imagine that being believed to-day! We can hear Christendom saying, Å“﻿Nonsense, human nature is not evil.﻿Å” The feature of to-day is the love of man that hates God. We are alienated from the standpoint of Jesus, we have become incarnated by a leaven that never came from His point of view, and if we are going to stand for Him we shall find that what He said is true: ﻿Å“﻿They will turn you out of the synagogues﻿Å”﻿Å—not because we denounce sin, a socialist denounces sin as much as a preacher of the Gospel. The difference between a Christian worker and one who does not know Jesus Christ is just this—that a Christian worker can never m

meet anyone of whom he can despair. If we do despair of anyone, it is because we have never met Jesus Christ ourselves. The social worker who does not know what Jesus Christ came to do will end in absolute despair before long, because the social worker more than anyone else begins to see the enormous havoc that sin has made of human nature, and if he does not know the Saviour from sin, all his efforts will meet with as much success as attempting to empty the Atlantic Ocean with a thimble.

(b) Saviour from Sin

The great challenge in personal work is—What relationship have I to Jesus Christ? It is not simply that we realise the power of Jesus to save, but that we recognise the possibilities for evil in our own heart, discerned in us by the Holy Spirit, and know that Jesus can save unto the uttermost. Let a man be a murderer, or an evildoer, or any of the things Jesus said men could be, it can never shake our confidence if we have once been face to face with Jesus Christ for ourselves. It is impossible to discourage us because we start from a knowledge of Who Jesus Christ is in our own life. When we see evil and wrong exhibited in other lives, instead of awakening a sickening despair, it awakens a joyful confidence—I know a Saviour who can save even that one. One worker like that is of priceless worth, because through that one life the Son of God is being manifested.

It is not only necessary to have an experience of God's grace, we must have a body of beliefs alive with the Spirit of Jesus, then when we have learned to see men as He sees them, there is no form of disease or anguish or devilishness that can belch up in human life that can disturb our confidence in Him; if it does disturb us, it is because we don't know Him.

The sense of sin is in inverse ratio to its presence, that is, the higher up and the deeper down we are saved, the more powerfully terrible is our conviction of sin. The holiest person is not the one who is not conscious of sin, but the one who is most conscious of what sin is. The one who talked most about sin was our Lord Jesus Christ. We are apt to run off with the idea that a man in order to be saved from sin must have lived a vile life himself; but the One who has an understanding of the awful horror of sin is the spotlessly holy Christ, Who knew no sin. The lower down we get into the experience of sin, the less conviction of sin we have. When we are regenerated and lifted into the light, we begin to know what sin means. There is no mention of sin in the Apostle Paul's apprehension by Christ, yet no one wrote more about sin than the Apostle Paul years after in his Epistles, because by the marvellous working of God's grace and his own repentance, he was lifted into the heavenly places; where he saw what sin really was. The danger with those of us who have experienced God's perfect salvation is that we talk blatant jargon about an experience instead of banking on the tremendous revelation of God the Holy Ghost. The purer we are through God's sovereign grace, the more terribly poignant is our sense of sin. It is perilous to say, "I have nothing to do with sin now"; you are the only kind of person who can know what sin is. Men living in sin don't know anything about it. Sin destroys the capacity of knowing what sin is. It is when we have been delivered from sin that we begin to realise by the pure light of the Holy Ghost what sin is. We shall find over and over again that God will send us shuddering to our knees every time we realise what sin is, and instead of it increasing hardness in us towards the men and women who are living in sin, the Spirit of God will use it as a means of bringing us to the dust before Him in vicarious intercession that God will save them as He has saved us. Beware of the metallic, hard, un-Christlike stamp of some testimonies to sanctification, they are not stamped by the Holy Ghost. The testimony to sanctification that is of God is dipped and saturated in the blood of the Son of God, and that blood sprang from the broken heart of God on account of sin. When once the soul realises what sanctification is, it is a joy unspeakable, but it is a joy in which there is the tremendous undercurrent of a chastening humiliation. Beware of any experience that is not built absolutely on the atoning merit of Jesus Christ; and remember, the measure of your freedom from sin is the measure of your sense of what sin is.

Oswald Chambers

Re: The Base Impulse ~ Concluded - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/11/14 9:21

Ever get those 'just preceding' things? An intimation that is followed up elsewhere... Here is one;

Quote:

-----What we are trying to do to-day is to Christianise civilisation,
