

Articles and Sermons :: An almighty personal Friend - Ryle

An almighty personal Friend - Ryle - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/11/3 7:05

(J. C. Ryle, "To Whom?" 1880)

"Because of what Jesus said, many of His disciples turned their backs on Him and stopped following Him." John 6:66

Millions in every age have turned their back on Christ. The defection is continually going on. It is an old disease, and must not surprise us.

The heart is always deceitful and desperately wicked;
the devil is always busy, and seeking whom he may devour;
the world is always ensnaring;
the way of life is narrow,
the enemies many,
the friends few,
the difficulties great,
the cross heavy,
the doctrine of the gospel offensive to the natural man.

What thoughtful person need wonder that multitudes in every age turn back from Christ, throw off all religion, and perish miserably!

It is only the 'sifting process' which God permits, in order to separate the wheat from the chaff, through which we must all pass. The world after all, with . . .
its pitfalls and snares for the soul,
its competitions and struggles,
its failures and successes,
its disappointments,
its perplexities,
its perpetual crop of crude theories and extreme views,
its mental conflicts and anxieties,
its extravagant 'free thought',
its equally extravagant superstition,
--the world is a fiery furnace and ordeal, through which all believers must make up their minds to pass.

"Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life!" John 6:68

Where, indeed, could we turn . . .
for peace of heart,
for satisfaction of conscience,
for hope in the world to come,
--if we turn away from Jesus?

To whom, indeed, shall we go for help, strength, and comfort--if we turn our backs on Christ?

We live in a world of troubles, whether we like it or not. Our bodies are liable to a thousand ailments, and our hearts to a thousand sorrows. No creature on earth is so vulnerable, and so capable of intense physical as well as mental suffering, as man.

Sickness,
and death,
and funerals,
and partings,
and separations,
and losses,
and failures,
and disappointments,
and private family trials,
which no mortal eye sees, will break in upon us from time to time; and we desperately need help to meet them! Alas, where will our thirsty, wailing hearts find such help--if we leave Christ?

The plain truth is, that nothing but an almighty personal Friend will ever meet the legitimate needs of man's soul--with His daily help, sympathy, and watchful care.