

General Topics :: RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT

RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/21 22:22

Let us not sleep, as do others

There are many ways of promoting Christian wakefulness. Among the rest, let me strongly advise Christians to converse together concerning the ways of the Lord. Christian and Hopeful, as they journeyed towards the Celestial City, said to themselves, "To prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse." Christian enquired, "Brother, where shall we begin?" And Hopeful answered, "Where God began with us." Then Christian sang this song--

"When saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither, And hear how these two pilgrims talk together; Yea, let them learn of them, in any wise, Thus to keep open their drowsy slumb'ring eyes. Saints' fellowship, if it be managed well, Keeps the m awake, and that in spite of hell."

Christians who isolate themselves and walk alone, are very liable to grow drowsy. Hold Christian company, and you will be kept wakeful by it, and refreshed and encouraged to make quicker progress in the road to heaven. But as you thus take "sweet counsel" with others in the ways of God, take care that the theme of your converse is the Lord Jesus. Let the eye of faith be constantly looking unto Him; let your heart be full of Him; let your lips speak of His worth. Friend, live near to the cross, and thou wilt not sleep. Labour to impress thyself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which thou art going. If thou rememberest that thou art going to heaven, thou wilt not sleep on the road. If thou thinkest that hell is behind thee, and the devil pursuing thee, thou wilt not loiter. Would the manslayer sleep with the avenger of blood behind him, and the city of refuge before him? Christian, wilt thou sleep whilst the pearly gates are open--the songs of angels waiting for thee to join them--a crown of gold ready for thy brow? Ah! no; in holy fellowship continue to watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid7>) C.H. Spurgeon

Re: Random Article: Thomas Watson - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/22 23:48

Comfort & Joy: The Mourner's Privilege

Part 1

Mourning is one way to solid joy. "The sweet wine is that which comes out of the wine-press of the eyes," says Chrysostom. The soul is never more enlarged than when it can weep. Closet tears are better than court music. The soul of a Christian is most eased when it can vent itself by holy mourning. David who was the great mourner in Israel was the sweet singer in Israel. "My tears were my meat" (Psalm 42:3). "The tears of the penitent," says Bernard, "are sweeter than all worldly joy". A Christian thinks himself sometimes in the suburbs of heaven when he can weep. When Hannah had wept, she went away and was no more sad. Sugar when it melts is sweetest. When a Christian melts in tears, he has the sweetest joy. When the daughter of Pharaoh descended into the river, she found a babe there among the reeds; so when we descend into the river of repenting tears, we find the babe, Jesus, there who shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Mourning goes before comfort as the lancing of a wound precedes the cure. The antinomian talks of comfort, but cries down mourning for sin. He is like a foolish patient who, having a pill prescribed him, licks the sugar, but throws away the pill. The libertine is all for joy and comfort. He licks the sugar but throws away the bitter pill of repentance. If we have true comfort, we must have it in God's way and method. Sorrow for sin ushers in joy: "I will restore comforts to him, and to his mourners" (Isaiah 57:18). The true sunshine of joy is that which comes after a shower of tears. We may as well expect a crop without seed, as comfort without gospel-mourning.

Observe that God keeps His best wine till last. First He prescribes mourning for sin and then gives the wine of consolation. The devil does quite the contrary. He shows the best first and keeps the worst till last. First, he shows the wine sparkling in the glass, then comes the biting of the serpent. (See Proverbs 23:32). Satan sets his dainty dishes before men. He presents sin to them colored with beauty, sweetened with pleasure, silvered with profit, and then afterward the sad reckoning is brought in. He showed Judas first the silver bait, and then struck him with the hook. This is the reason why sin has so many followers, because it shows the best first. First, the golden crowns, then comes the lion's teeth. (Revelation 9:

7,8).

Observe, gospel tears are not lost; they are seeds of comfort. While the penitent pours out tears, God pours in joy. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (Psalms 126:5). It was the end of Christ's anointing and coming into the world, that He might comfort them that mourn (Isaiah 61:3). Well then may the apostle call it "a repentance not to be repented of" (2 Corinthians 7:10). A man's drunkenness is to be repented of; his uncleanness is to be repented of; but his repentance is never to be repented of, because it is the inlet to joy. "Blessed art they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Here is sweet fruit from a bitter stock. Christ caused the earthen vessels to be filled with water, and then turned the water into wine (John 2:9). So when the eye, that earthen vessel, has been filled with water, then Christ will turn the water of tears into the wine of joy. "Holy mourning", says Basil, "is the seed out of which the flower of eternal joy grows."

Reasons why the mourner shall be comforted:

Because mourning is made on purpose for this end. Mourning is not prescribed for itself, but that it may lead on to something else, that it may lay a train for comfort. Therefore we sow in tears that we may reap in joy. Holy mourning is a spiritual medicine. Now a medicine is not prescribed for itself, but for the sake of health. So gospel-mourning is appointed for its very end, to bring forth joy.

The spiritual mourner is the fittest person for comfort. When the heart is broken for sin, now it is fittest for joy. God pours the golden oil of comfort into broken vessels. The mourner's heart is emptied of pride and God fills the empty with His blessing. First, the comforts of God's Spirit are laid in deep conviction: "And when He (that is, the Comforter) is come, He shall reprove (or, convince) the world of sin" (John 16:7,8). Why does conviction go before consolation? Conviction fits us for comfort. By conviction the Spirit sweetly disposes the heart to seek after Christ and then to receive Christ. Once the soul is convinced of sin and of the hell that follows it, a Savior is precious.

Continued...

Re: Random Article: Thomas Watson - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/22 23:50

Part 2

The comforts of the Spirit are humbling. The more water is poured into a bucket, the lower it descends; the fuller the ship is laden with sweet spices, the lower it sails. The more a Christian is filled with the sweet comforts of the Spirit, the lower he sails in humility. The fuller a tree is of fruit, the lower the branch hangs. The more full we are of "the fruit of the Spirit, joy and peace" (Galatians 5:22), the more we bend in humility. Those who say they have comfort, but are proud, who have learned to despise others and have climbed above ordinances; their comforts are delusions. The devil is able, not only to "transform himself into angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14), but he can transform himself into a comforter. It is easy to counterfeit money, to silver over brass and put the king's image upon it. The devil can silver over false comforts and make them look as if they had the stamp of the King of heaven upon them. The comforts of God are humbling. Though they lift the heart up in thankfulness, yet they do not puff it up in pride. The comforts reserved for the mourners are "filling comforts" "The God of hope fill you with all joy . . ." (Romans 15:13). "Ask . . . that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). When God pours in the joys of heaven, they fill the heart and make it run over. "I am exceeding joyful . . ." (2 Corinthians 7:4).

The comforts which God gives His mourners are infinitely, transporting and ravishing. So delightful are they and amazing, that they cause a jubilation which, as some of the learned say, is so great that it cannot be expressed. Of all things joy is the most hard to be deciphered. It is called "joy unspeakable." (1 Peter 1:8). You may sooner taste honey than tell how sweet it is. The wine of the Spirit can sweeten the waters of Marah. They who are possessed of these heavenly comforts can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the lion's carcass. They are strong consolations indeed, that can stand it out against the fiery trial, and turn the flame into a bed of roses. How powerful is that comfort which can make a Christian glory in tribulations! (Romans 5:3). A believer is never so sad but that he can rejoice. The bird of paradise can sing in the winter.

The comforts that God's mourners have are heart-quieting comforts. They cause a sweet acquiescence and rest in the soul. The heart of a Christian is in a kind of discomposure, like the needle in the compass; it shakes and trembles till the Comforter comes. Some creatures cannot live but in the sun. A Christian is even dead in the nest, unless he may have the sunlight of God's countenance. "Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit" (Psalm 143:7).

The comforts of the Spirit are abiding comforts. As they abound in us so they abide with us. "He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Worldly comforts are always upon the wing, ready to fly. They are like a land-flood, or a flash of lightning. All things here are transient, but the comforts with which God feeds His mourners are immortal. "Who hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation" (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Though a Christian does not always have a sunbeam of comfort, yet he has a dawning of it in his soul. He always has a ground of hope and a root of joy. There is that within him which bears up his heart, and which he would not on any terms part with. Behold, then, the mourner's privilege, he shall be comforted. David who was the great mourner of Israel, was the sweet singer of Israel. The weeping dove shall be covered with the golden feathers of comfort. Oh, how rare and superlative are these comforts!

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid169>) Thomas Watson

Re: Random Article strikes again - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/8/8 14:39

A Simple Prayer

"I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).

I went to America some years ago with the captain of a steamer, who was a very devoted Christian. When off the coast of Newfoundland he said to me, "The last time I crossed here, five weeks ago, something happened which revolutionized the whole of my Christian life. We had George Mueller of Bristol on board. I had been on the bridge twenty-four hours and never left it. George Mueller came to me, and said, "Captain I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec Saturday afternoon." "It is impossible," I said. "Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years. Let us go down into the chart-room and pray."

I looked at that man of God, and thought to myself, what lunatic asylum can that man have come from? I never heard of such a thing as this. "Mr. Mueller," I said, "do you know how dense this fog is?" "No," he replied, "my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life."

He knelt down and prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he had finished I was going to pray; but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to pray. "First, you do not believe He will answer; and second I BELIEVE HE HAS, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it."

I looked at him, and he said, "Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door, and you will find the fog gone." I got up, and the fog was indeed gone. On Saturday afternoon, George Mueller was in Quebec for his engagement.--Selected

"If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine,
In the sweetness of our Lord."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid512>) Mrs. Charles E. Cowman

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/8/8 19:31

Quote:

-----Re: Random Article strikes again

Brother it strikes to much for me! I read some titles and know I should read it.. here is one I just procured...

Blurred Goals and Spiritual Impediments

Like a doctor with a sick patient whose disease eludes diagnosis, religious leaders have for some years been aware that there is something seriously wrong with evangelicalism and have yet been unable to lay their finger upon the precise trouble. The symptoms they have discovered in abundance, but the cause back of them has been hard to locate. Mostly we have spent our time correcting symptoms, having all the while an uneasy feeling that our remedies did not go deep enough.

ough. Knowing that a disease that cannot be identified invariably calls out a flock of untrained experts to analyze and prescribe, we yet risk a pronouncement upon the condition of evangelical Christianity in our day, and we believe we may not be too far from the truth. The trouble seems to be a disorder of the spiritual nerve system which we might, for the lack of a proper term, call dual orientation. Its dominant characteristic appears to be a cross up among the nerve ganglia of the soul resulting in an inability to control the direction of the life. The patient starts one direction and before he knows it he is going another. His inward eyes do not coordinate; each one sees a different object and seeks to lead the steps toward it. The individual is caught in the middle, trying to be true to both foci of the heart, and never knowing which he would rather follow. Evangelicalism (at least in many circles) is suffering from this strange division of life-purpose. Its theology faces toward the East and the sacred Temple of Jehovah. Its active interests face toward the world and the temple of Dagon. Doctrinally it is Christian, but actually it is pagan mentality, pagan scale of values and pagan religious principles.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid2>) A.W. Tozer

--

"Mostly we have spent our time correcting symptoms" - that struck a cord with me that we are just maintaining and treating symptoms when as in Ravenhill's words we 'need to die' **small** sacrifices, consecrations, faith, discipline will not cut it in an age when there need to be jurassic measures taken, we need to be lost in the purposes of God. We need a new standard, we need to walk holy, We need to be filled with the spirit of God afresh and allow Him FULL control of our lives. Hearing a sermon by Keith Daniel recently really ministered to me where he said the only question the world is crying out in their hearts today is "We would see Jesus, sir?" People don't want to hear more preaching and theology they want to see Jesus in our words, actions and lives, they want to see holiness and something different then there bankrupt way of living. We need to set a standard and allow the world to see we are different! "We will not win the world by being like the world, the world will win YOU!" - Keith Daniel

Random Article strikes again - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/8/14 22:55

Let Us Keep To The Point

“My eager desire and hope being that I may never feel ashamed, but that now as ever I may do honour to Christ in my own person by fearless courage.”
Philippians 1:20

My Utmost for His Highest. "My eager desire and hope being that I may never feel ashamed." We shall all feel very much ashamed if we do not yield to Jesus on the point He has asked us to yield to Him. Paul says - "My determination is to be my utmost for His Highest." To get there is a question of will, not of debate nor of reasoning, but a surrender of will, an absolute and irrevocable surrender on that point. An overweening consideration for ourselves is the thing that keeps us from that decision, though we put it that we are considering others. When we consider what it will cost others if we obey the call of Jesus, we tell God He does not know what our obedience will mean. Keep to the point; He does know. Shut out every other consideration and keep yourself before God for this one thing only - My Utmost for His Highest. I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and for Him alone.

My Undeterredness for His Holiness. "Whether that means life or death, no matter!" (v.21.) Paul is determined that nothing shall deter him from doing exactly what God wants. God's order has to work up to a crisis in our lives because we will not heed the gentler way. He brings us to the place where He asks us to be our utmost for Him, and we begin to debate; then He produces a providential crisis where we have to decide - for or against, and from that point the "Great Divide" begins.

If the crisis has come to you on any line, surrender your will to Him absolutely and irrevocably.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid484>) Oswald Chambers

Re: Random Article strikes again - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/8/27 7:11

Today's Sleeping Giant

Leonard Ravenhill

Solemnly and slowly, with his index finger extended, Napoleon Bonaparte outlined a great stretch of country on a map of the world. "There," he growled, "is a sleeping giant. Let him sleep! If he wakes, he will shake the world." That sleeping giant was China. Today, Bonaparte's prophecy of some one hundred and fifty years ago makes sense.

Today Lucifer is probably surveying the church just as Bonaparte did China. One can almost behold the fear in his eyes as he thinks of the Church's unmeasured potential and growls, "Let the Church sleep! If she wakes, she will shake the world." Is not the Church the sleeping giant of today?

Some years ago the newspaper headlines carried the story of a young Chinese student who "flunked" his exams here in America. So humiliated was he and so withered by anticipated scorn that for three years the youth hid in the belfry of a church and became skin and bones. Because of his shame, he froze in winter and blistered in summer under that church's thin roof. As today's Church of Jesus Christ thinks about the day of reckoning that is surely coming, oh that a holy fear would come upon her (even if it drives her to extremes) in order to arouse her from her present paralysis!

Consider Samson's fall. He didn't get drunk; he didn't commit murder; he didn't steal. Samson fell simply because he succumbed to the natural, and fell asleep.

That one small act put him into captivity,

made a false god popular,

and scattered the forces of the true and living God.

If even yet you feel a hangover of the old interpretation that the Samson of the Bible is a distant relative of Hercules or Atlas (famed in mythology for carrying the world on his back), then think again. Samson was no human monstrosity. He was no super-edition of a Goliath. If Samson had been a colossus, then why did Delilah ask the question, "Wherein lieth thy great strength?"

Let the final word be from the Word of God itself, for in telling the story of men mighty in faith, the writer to the Hebrews says: Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson,... who through faith ... stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb. 11:32-33). Only two men in Scripture stopped the mouths of lions--Daniel and Samson. But no giant could sing le-handedly, as Samson, "put to flight the armies of the aliens," or toy with opposing armies.

Here, Samson slays a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass;

there, he kills another thirty men.

Here, he takes the gates of Gaza for a ride;

there, he tears a lion like paper.

To add insult to injury, the Spirit's comment is "he had nothing in his hand."

Note well, yea, read for yourself the whole story of the secret of this mighty exploiter, this more-than-conquering believer: "The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon him." Everything in the story adds up to this staggering fact: Supernatural power was upon Samson.

Now turn back ten chapters in this wonder book of Judges and have a little peep into the life of Gideon. Surely as a boy, Gideon had heard from his father the hair-raising stories of a mighty Deity. In Judges 6, Gideon is older, and while threshing corn, is fearing an attack of the Midianites. For seven years, the once liberated slaves of Pharaoh had again become captives. Dens and caves were their homes. No longer were they able to sing the Lord's song.

It must have sounded like a fairy tale when that angel appeared to Gideon and informed him, "God is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Yet he shot back the answer, "If God be with us, where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of

" This answer makes clear that Gideon was expecting some supernatural evidence. To him, the seal of the Lord's presence would be something that could not be rationalized.

Alas that today there is more evidence of religious sensation before our eyes than evidence of spiritual regeneration and supernatural phenomenon! Not many Christians today can forget the fact that the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, but we seem to have lost sight of the fact that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has defeated the roaring lion of hell, and therefore every anointed Samson or Gideon or church can also slay the lion of hell. Though wicked men are doing wickedly, God's promise to us is that "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

This much is sure:

If we could merit revival by fasting, there would be many martyred by starving.

If we could organize revival, we would pool our thinking to outwit the powers of darkness.

If we could buy this elusive revival with the mammon of unrighteousness, we could get a score of what we call Christian millionaires to underwrite the thing for us.

If we could blast the devil from this present world, we would pledge the politicians for an atom bomb.

God pity us that after years of writing, using mountains of paper and rivers of ink, exhausting flashy terminology about the biggest revival meetings in history, we are still faced with gross corruption in every nation, as well as with the most prayerless church age since Pentecost.

This is a plea for the return of the supernatural; but I must also give this a word of explanation. For a decade, all over this land there has been a ministry of the miraculous (more or less), and thank God for all who honor Him and remain faithful. But having said that, here is a plea for sane thinking and a spiritual evaluation of the evangelistic field. To a large degree, have we not substituted seeing for hearing? In Acts, Philip the evangelist could have transferred the Ethiopian eunuch to a city seething with revival fever where the eunuch could have seen "the lame leap like an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing." Instead, he pitched right into the Word of the living God, and beginning at the same Scripture preached unto him Jesus. We need the miraculous but we also need Christ-centered teaching. Our crucified, exalted Christ must have preeminence over all other slants of truth, for while the Church is languishing, the world is perishing. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord..." (Isaiah 51:9)

Again let me say, Samson's size was not the secret of his strength. The fact that he was the same size after he backslid negates the idea that he was a giant. His only external peculiarity was his long locks, uncut because he was a Nazarite. Nor had his long hair in itself any abnormal power. Samson's secret was obedience. As long as Samson trod the straight and narrow path of obedience, he was invincible.

Let us remember, too, that Samson, who began in the Spirit, fell into the flesh, and so had a prison term to bring him to his senses. Finally, by one last mighty miracle, he finished in the Spirit. Backslider, this is a word for your recovery, for God can restore the years that the cankerworm and the caterpillar have eaten. He who is able delights in mercy.

Samson's final act of power was the crowning achievement of a spectacular life's work. After he had slipped out from under the harness of obedience, he was forced into separation from the world in a prison. Once an army trembled at his every sight; later a single boy came to lead the blinded Samson into the temple of Dagon, the fish-god. How the mighty had fallen! Yet now, God took this "weak thing" into a temple full of lords of the Philistines and set him between the pillars. "Samson took hold of the pillars ... the one with his right hand and the other with his left ... and he bowed himself with all His might" (Judges 16:29-30) Holy jealousy gripped him. Mighty as he had been in other things, Samson now proved mightiest in prayer: "Lord, strengthen me ... this once!" (vs. 28) Would to God that every professed believer in the whole of Christendom would borrow this prayer and mean it. Then with dramatic conclusion, Samson sealed the doom of many more of the enemies of God in his dying than in his living.

Is this the dying hour of this dispensation? Many say it is. Some Christians have already hung their harps on the willows, and yet others seem to delight in speaking of the Church's present lapse as a proof of divine inspiration. But I myself believe that if the Church will only obey the conditions, she can have a revival any time she wants it. The problem of the Church is the problem in the garden of Gethsemane-sleep! For while men sleep, the enemy sows his seed through his cults. Lest men sleep the sleep of eternal death, O arm of the Lord, O Church of the living God, awake!

If the church is going to attain to her potential in this last hour, it is apparent that we are going to have to dust off an old word that many of us have forgotten is in the English language -- DISCIPLINE! To some, this word discipline will have a monastic flavor, for it smells of the Middle Ages or throws onto the screen of the mind a picture of an unwashed hermit or a hollow-eyed anchorite. Be not deceived. Every smart "top brass" military expert has arrived there because he wore the harness of discipline. Leonard Bernstein in his music-talks holds his baton like a magic wand over mesmerized millions because of discipline. This brings to mind the words of the poet:

The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight,

But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward through the night!

If any man wants to write a bestseller, let him attempt a book on How to be a Saint in Six Easy Lessons. Such a writer would be fishing with bait that this generation of believers wants; but I, for one, would not swallow it.

In a brilliant sermon called "Discipleship," G. Cambell Morgan says, "Jesus Christ could speak to the sorrow-burdened heart of humanity words so full of mother-love and father-love as to make men crowd and press round Him. On the other hand, He could suddenly speak words that flashed and scorched and burned until men drew back in astonishment." Bracketed in the last group would be these two commands: "Take my yoke upon you" and "My disciple, take up your cross and follow me." Both of these words imply discipline.

When we sing in a sunlit church "Oh to be like Thee; Oh to be like Thee," we get weepy and feel an emotional lift. But permit this simple challenge:

Do we really mean 'Oh to be like Thee' -- like the Christ of God, who was a man of discipline?

Do we really mean 'Oh to be like Thee' -- fasting alone in the desert?

Do we mean 'Oh to be like Thee' to touch the depths of prayer that make us cry, 'All Thy billows are gone over me.'

Do we mean 'Oh to be like Thee' -- to become habituates of the fastness of the prayer chamber?

Do we mean 'Oh to be like Thee' -- in a will like His, for He said,

"I always do the will of my Father." Is that not discipline?

The religious sentimentalist who sings "Just a closer walk with Thee" but walks close to the ungodly and sits with the blasphemers, is not taken seriously in either heaven or hell. Be very sure, friend, that this vile world is not "a friend to grace to help on to God." We need to pray the Father to put some blood into this "water" that runs through our veins. Our Simon-like natures need the Upper Room fire to clean us out and the discipline of the Spirit to shape us into soldiers.

Twenty-five years of discipline in a crow's nest of an office up behind his church in Chicago brought about a Dr. A. W. Tozer, who produced a book, The Pursuit of God. This in turn produced on the ocean of spiritual teaching waves that lap their way to the ends of the earth.

After I spoke at a session in the Bible School of Wales, Mrs. Rees Howells called me for a private talk. We stood on the veranda of her home overlooking beautiful Swansea Bay I can see her finger upheld as she said, "Many talk of my husband's buying this place with a shilling (fourteen cents) in his pocket. What they forget is that he prayed twelve hours a day for eleven months to know the mind of God." Brethren, that's discipline!

Today, immediately when one gets out of step with a nearby Christian, he is considered a legalist. Just remember, in "that great day of Judgment" when we must stand before His throne, no man will be ashamed he was dubbed over-spiritual, though many will weep, groan, and "suffer loss" because of lack of discipline. Discipline is a harness by which we enable the Spirit to get the best out of our frail humanity. The Apostle Paul was a disciplinarian like his Master:

He disciplined his body: "I keep my body under."

He disciplined himself to loneliness: "All men forsook me."

He disciplined himself to scorn: "We are fools for Christ's sake."

He disciplined himself to poverty: "We suffered need."

He disciplined himself to rejection: "We are despised."

He disciplined himself to death: "I die daily."

He disciplined himself to suffering: "Persecuted, but not forsaken."

May this be our prayer, "Oh Lord, I bow my neck to Thy yoke!"

Since the hour Adam first rose to his feet, man has not stood, as today, between such potential and such peril. America is still the richest nation in the world. It is a mighty crucible into which refugees of almost all modern nations are poured. It has far more Bible schools than any other nation. In these Bible schools is dedicated manpower. Here, too, is wealth to get this manpower to the ends of the earth, and here is linguistic ability unmatched in the annals of time.

Even the gathering at Pentecost had not the potential, humanly speaking, that this vast nation has. Do you wonder, then, that from every angle, hell has America under cross fire? This mighty land is cursed with blessings. I fear that unless she awakens, repents, and puts on the whole armor, of God, she will be blessed with cursings. Already other nations are in the slavery of oppression. Can America and Britain long remain free? Unless we are to have the war of wars that will usher us into the night of nights and the judgment of judgments, we must have the revival of revivals. Pale, pathetic, palliating preaching must be driven from the church like the idols it promotes. It is time for the church to cry again, "Where is the God of Elijah?"

Ambrose Fleming called the resurrection of Jesus Christ "the best attested fact in history" Yet at Easter time, vain effort is made to rationalize the stupendous event of the Resurrection in order to try to save face before pseudo-intellectualism, which boggles at the fact that the Lord of glory died and rose again, triumphant over death, over hell, and over the grave. Who, then, can dispute the following biting statements of Murdo MacDonald in his book, *The Vitality of Faith*: "Ever since the Renaissance, men have been trying to water down the Christian creed. Give us a religion purged of everything that defies logic, a religion stripped of the supernatural and emptied of miracle, a religion that is smooth and palatable and rationally acceptable-this has been the popular cry" Surely the church, weak in heart and courage, has gone out of the way to oblige.

The doom of this decaying civilization is spelled out in our crowded divorce courts, our all-time high of alcoholics and drug addicts, the number of illegitimate births or the number of abortions. A Gallup poll shows that these days most people accept lying as part of everyday business. Virtue is scorned.

Truth lies fallen in the street!

Somewhere in the archives of the British Admiralty at Whitehall, London, they have the record of a fine piece of maritime strategy. Ships of five nations were anchored in a bay in the South Pacific. A fierce storm was gathering offshore. The British captain decided to run, not away from the storm but into it. Everything available was battened down. Out crashed the ship into the boiling seas-pitching, tossing, rolling, and shuddering. Indeed, she did everything but go down. A couple of days later, buffeted but not broken, she returned to the port to find the ships of the other nations piled up on the beach.

The storm of the ages is about to break. Let the church call its crew to a new dedication. Remembering that Christ is at the helm, and with Christ's Crest as our ensign, let us run into the storm. After the storm, we, too, shall return-to see upon the shores of time the battered, piled, wrecked, hell-inspired ideologies of the hour.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid28>) Leonard Ravenhill

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 10:54

The Cross and the Flesh

L.E. Maxwell

1.) COULD THE FLESH SPEAK as it faces the Cross, it would be forced to use the language of one, Amiel, (as recorded by Amy Carmichael). After he had received at the hands of his doctors the verdict which was to him the arrest of death he said, "On waking, it seemed to me that I was staring into the future with wide-startled eyes. Is it indeed to me that these things apply? Incessant and growing humiliation, my slavery becoming heavier, my circle of action steadily narrower? What is hateful is that deliverance can never be hoped for, and that one misery will succeed another in such a way as to leave me no breathing space, not even in the future, not even in hope. All possibilities are closed to me, one by one."

To the flesh the Cross is God's verdict, God's "arrest of death." Paul traveled a long road to learn "that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." "Is it indeed to me," cries the awakened believer, "that these very things apply?" It does seem to take a long time to learn that the mind of the flesh "is enmity against God." It is therefore "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The verdict has gone forth, the sentence executed. The only cure is condemnation, crucifixion, death with Christ. The flesh with all its foul brood has been put to the hanged man's doom. To the accursed tree, Christ nailed the flesh with "the affections and lusts." There, Christ reversed all the processes of nature; the old life was terminated to make room for the new, for death can never inherit life. And "the mind of the flesh is death." The flesh has about it "the smell of infernal associations. It stinks." Since its mind is already death, God sent it to its own place--the Cross.

In speaking of "the flesh" as contrary to "the Spirit," Scripture refers to the whole of human nature in its fallen condition. We read of the wills of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the mind of the flesh, the wisdom of the flesh, the purposes of the flesh, the confidence of the flesh, the filthiness of the flesh, the workings of the flesh, the warring of the flesh, the glorying of the flesh. Scripture mentions those who walk according to the flesh, after the flesh, make a fair show in the flesh. Man's emotions, his reasonings, his powers--all his thinking and willing and energy--are under the lordship of the flesh. The flesh must go to the Cross. It must be made to face the fact and made to say that "deliverance can never be hoped for, all possibilities are closed to me in such a way as to leave me no breathing space, not even in the future, not even in hope. It is to me these very things apply." The Cross seizes hold of man's fleshly self-life, and carries it to judgment, a judgment so final that it spells death.

cont...

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 10:57

2.) Amiel indeed felt it "difficult for the natural man to escape from a dumb rage against" such an inexorable arrest. It is worse than difficult; it is impossible. But with God, the impossible becomes possible. Those who have been born again have gone through this judgment in the person of Christ. To the unbeliever, God says, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." But to us He says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." We are assured of this that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." And as we yield ourselves continually unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, we experience that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. The word of assurance is that, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, (and he seems about to say to the Holy Spirit; but he turns to say) not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Rom. 8:11, 12). The flesh has been judged and our position is "in the Spirit."

Even though the believer has emerged from the muddle and mixedness of Romans 7 through Paul's command "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," the fact remains that he will discover many ways in which self seeks satisfaction through the as-yet-unredeemed spheres of his being. The flesh, the body, all "our mortal coil" is evidently still present in Romans 8. That chapter presents many ways in which mortification must set in. The victorious believer will become aware of many forms of self which must yet be dealt with. We shall discover: In our service for Christ, self-confidence and self-esteem; in the slightest suffering, self-saving and self-pity; in the least misunderstanding, self-defense and self-vindication; in our station in life, self-seeking and self-centeredness; in the smallest trials, self-inspection and self-accusation; in the daily routine, self-pleasing and self-choosing; in our relationships, self-assertiveness and self-respect; in our education, self-boasting and self-expression; in our desires, self-indulgence and self-satisfaction; in our successes, self-admiration and self-congratulation; in our failures, self-excusing and self-justification; in our spiritual attainments, self-righteousness and self-complacency; in our public ministry, self-reflection and self-glory; in life as a whole, self-love and self-

fishness. The flesh is an "I" specialist.

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:00

3.) These are but a few of the multiple forms of "the flesh" to be discovered and taken to the Cross. "In the Palace of Wu rtzung there hangs a hall of glass. It is called the Hall of a Thousand Mirrors. You enter--a thousand hands are stretched out to meet you, a thousand smiles greet your smile, a thousand eyes will weep when you weep; but they are all your hands, your smiles, your tears. What a picture of the selfish man! Self all round, self multiplied, and he is deceived" (Mantle). It is of God's wisdom that we should not be burdened with the discovery of these many forms of the flesh life all at once. Although emancipated at the life-center of our redeemed beings through the indwelling and infilling of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, we are still in a fight--albeit on the victory side. Vast areas of the flesh must yet be crucified. We must become Christ-like. As an old black Christian in Africa put it: "The Cross of Christ condemns me to become a saint." We left Egypt "in haste." Let Egypt leave us "with a vengeance." Look no more that way. Not deliverance but death lies in that direction. "Their horses are flesh and not spirit." Expect not to "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds." Calvary's floods of death are between us and that world. We have been crucified with Christ. There let us stand. Be consistent. Why halt between two opinions? Why be double minded? Why make provision for the flesh? Why not pay your last respects to the flesh? We are debtors, thank God, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. You are His? Then be His. Be what you are. Be out and out. Obey God. When God says, "Pluck out," don't try to salve your conscience with prayer. When God says, "Cut off," crying will not do.

We are largely creatures of habit. By birth we are selfish, and by long practice we have lived to please ourselves. We have long been debtors to certain fleshly tendencies. We have settled down perchance (wicked notion) that it must be ever thus. There are certain Canaanites that "would dwell in the land." They have chariots of iron. Let us set out a few of the more common and subtle forms of the flesh which are manifest "hangovers" in many Christians.

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:03

4.) You may always have been a murmuring, complaining Christian. You sulk and feel sorry for your "sad, sweet self." But you need not do so. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," He will so quicken your poor mortal, murmuring frame that you will experience the power of the Cross to cancel the complaining. There is a point to be observed, however; the victory will not be automatic. It will be only: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13).

You are sensitive, "thin-skinned"? Why not call it sinful pride? The next time somebody reproves you, just say, "You don't know half the truth. If you knew me you would say much worse." This may help you into harmony with the Cross. It will at least be the truth.

The flesh reasons that if your circumstances were only different you could have victory. But circumstances only reveal what is inside. Our insistence here is this: that "the eternal substance of a thing never lies in the thing itself, but in the quality of our reaction toward it. If in hard times we are kept from resentment, held in silence and filled with inward sweetness, that is what matters. The event that distressed us will pass from memory as a wind that passes and is gone. But what we were while the wind was blowing upon us has eternal consequences" (Amy Carmichael).

You may be a zealous Christian. But have you gotten over a fleshly itch for a thrilling baptism of power? Do you demand signs and wonders before you will believe? The flesh seeks to glory in God's very presence. Those who make such imperious demands upon God keep alive the very fleshly, selfish principle which must go to the Cross. In Old Testament ceremony, the blood, representing death, always preceded the anointing with oil, representing the Spirit. Do we forget that the Spirit comes from the Crucified in Heaven? Five bleeding wounds He bears. They still proclaim that the flesh with its passions and lusts was crucified. Nadab and Abihu once offered strange fire before God--and died.

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:05

5.) Are you given to gossip? The principle of curiosity is like the troubled sea that cannot rest. Does your tongue cast up a world of mire and dirt? We know a true minister who sought to control his tongue by taking a red hot poker and searing it. But the trouble was deeper. It was a heart matter. However, his attitude was right. He was willing to burn his tongue if that would help. He later learned how "through the Spirit" to mortify the deeds of the tongue.

Word just comes of a native preacher, until recently a flaming evangelist. His wife was self-assertive. In a certain issue she was manifestly wrong. But the preacher took sides with his wife. He has compromised with the flesh. Now, peace in the home is a wonderful thing, but not at such a price. The Spirit has ceased to use this preacher. Moreover, God gives d

rastic directions concerning such things when He says, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods . . . Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God" (Deut. 13:6-10). This generation has been "graced" to spiritual softness and death. We do not "fear" as our forefathers did. We need the stiffening of Moses.

Has the reader noticed that when we ourselves are wrong we become very tender toward others who are wrong?--the reason being that we want tender handling. "But syrupy affection never yet led to spiritual integrity. And though it looks so like the charity which is greater than faith and hope, that it is 'admired of many,' it is not admirable. It is sin" (Amy Carmichael). Was the native preacher taken off his feet so easily because he was already unwatchful against the flesh? Did his wife only furnish the self-consideration for which he was already looking? The flesh gave "place to the devil." Satan is not divided against himself. Flesh always cliques up with flesh.

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:07

6.) Why is there so little church discipline today? May one reason be that there would be so much tearful tenderness toward wrong-doers? Even the deacon says, "Don't mention my name in connection with this trouble." But he who stands not at the Cross cannot be standing in righteousness. At the Cross God put away sin. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13).

One of the most manifest forms of flesh is family flesh. Passing by the flesh that bites and devours one another, let us notice its subtler form. It is here that "44 syrupy affection" betrays the best of parents. Their fleshly attachment refuses to lead their children by the way of the Cross. Is it because the parents have not gone that way themselves?

A personal friend of the writer passed away a few years ago. This lady had been brought up to believe that what she liked her system needed and must have--whether of food or raiment. She was not extravagant. Her life just centered in her likes and tastes and preferences. To these she daily bowed. She liked color, bright red especially. She liked fats, was very fond of sweets. She clung to these things "as a cat clings to its home." They were her life. But the Saviour said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it." That is more than theology. It is a great fact, a principle of life; it is inexorable law. And it obtains even in this world. The very things we lust after, hold to, and seek to save for ourselves, we lose--lose those very things, find them distasteful to us, and that sooner than we think. Some months before passing away, color became unbearable to this lady. The flesh had to have bright red covered up. Her whole being revolted at fats. As to sweets--well, the least sugar became sickening. These had been her life--now she loathed them. She had loved her life, had never lost it, refused to lose it--now she loathed it.

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:09

7.) The Saviour said: "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life (preserve it alive is the thought) shall lose it." Had Lot's wife not left Sodom? Indeed she had. But her flesh still fed on Sodom's sweets, and so she had not left it, had not lost it. To, God, Sodom was only fit to be turned to a cinder; to Lot's wife it was still worth saving. She still sought to save her "life" from the falling fire--not her bodily life (for she was already outside the city),--but the things of her desire, the things of her world still back there in Sodom. She loved that life, longed for it, looked back and lost it--her life in Sodom, her bodily life, her all. There she stood, a pillar of salt, an eternal warning to those who live after the flesh.

My friend, the Lord is coming. What is your life? Is it lived in the Spirit? Oh the power of the Cross to, sever every relationship that would bind us to the flesh! We are debtors only to the Holy Spirit. Give the Cross full place in your life; abandon yourself recklessly to the Crucified, for over His crucified life the flesh has not one speck of power. Let the Cross seize upon you and sever you from that dominating thralldom to the flesh. "Every strong conviction ends by taking possession of us; it overcomes and absorbs us, and tears us ruthlessly from everything else." Has the Cross so seized upon your life? If it has, you can live for self nevermore. Rather, you will cry out with a determined saint of yore, "Oh my God, hear the cries of one on whom Thou hast had mercy, and prepare my heart to receive whatever Christ has purchased for me. Allow me not to rest short of it. Put a thorn in every enjoyment, a worm in every gourd, that would either prevent my being wholly thing, or in any measure retard my progress in the divine life" (T. C. Upham).

We cannot better close this chapter than by quoting from that bed-ridden saint and soldier of India, Miss Amy Carmichael

I. She knew the pathway of suffering. She bore in her body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/5 11:12

8.) We who follow the Crucified are not here to make a pleasant thing of life; we are called to suffering for the sake of a suffering, sinful world. The Lord forgive us our shameful evasions and hesitations. His brow was crowned with thorns; do we seek rosebuds for our crowning? His hands were pierced with nails; are our hands ringed with jewels? His feet were bare and bound; do our feet walk delicately? What do we know of travail? of tears that scald before they fall? of heartbreak? of being scorned? God forgive us our love of ease. God forgive us that so often we turn our faces from a life that is even remotely like His. Forgive us that we all but worship comfort, the delight of the presence of loved ones, possessions, treasure on earth. Far, far from our prayers too often is any thought of prayer for a love which will lead us to give one whom we love to follow our Lord to Gethsemane, to Calvary-perhaps because we have never been there ourselves.

Writing in this cold-war world, how can one tolerate the softness of the flesh, the love of ease, the self-pity and self-saving which has all but killed Christian testimony! Oh, the pain, the shame, the heartbreak of it all!

*Lord, when I am weary with toiling,
And burdensome seem Thy commands,
If my load should lead to complaining,
Lord, show me Thy Hands,--
Thy nail-pierced Hands, Thy cross-torn Hands,
My Saviour, show me Thy Hands.*

*Christ, if ever my footsteps should falter,
And I be prepared for retreat,
If desert or thorn cause lamenting,
Lord, show me Thy Feet-
Thy bleeding Feet, Thy nail-scarred Feet,-
My Jesus, show me Thy Feet.*

*O God, dare I show Thee
MY hands and MY feet.*

-Brenton Thoburn Badley.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid26>) L.E. Maxwell

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/9 8:52

Setting Our Minds On Things

The notion that Christians should always be optimistic and congenial is heresy pure and simple. An ill-founded optimism may, under certain conditions, be extremely harmful. A Christian is not obliged to be either pessimistic or optimistic or glad or sad or positive or negative after a preconceived rule of philosophy. He should (and will if he is Spirit-taught) reflect the will of God in any given situation. His one concern is with God's will. His one question in any set of circumstances is, what does God think of this? To him nothing else matters. What the current popular attitude may be is of no importance to him. He will approve or disapprove altogether as the written Word and the indwelling Spirit indicate. Religious vogues, passing moods or popular notions will affect him not at all. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

This rather rigid attitude will, in a world like ours, quite naturally work against the one who holds it and earn him a reputation as a pessimist. People like the man who agrees with them, even if a day later they change their minds and require him to change his, too. This inconsistency they laugh off as an amiable weakness, and why be so pious about it anyway?

Well, the sons and daughters of eternity care very little about this maypole dance of popular favor. Like the water bird on the shore of the lake at the approach of winter, they feel within them a strong instinct to migrate. They expect before long to take off on a journey and they're not coming back soon. So whether they leave behind them a reputation for pessimism or optimism is of little consequence to them. They are, however, eager to be remembered as children of God and follow

owers of the Lamb. That's all that matters to them.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid2>) A.W. Tozer

RASA - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:15

He Ever Liveth To Intercede

John A. Broadus

Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25

{1}

Years ago, in the city of Philadelphia, I went to hear an eminent musician. He played with genius and skill some magnificent music, but the pieces were nearly all new to me, and, as often happens in such cases, it required so much effort to comprehend the idea of the piece, that I could but partially enjoy its beauty. At length, upon being loudly applauded, the musician returned, and seating himself at the instrument, struck out in full tones the opening notes of "Home, Sweet Home." I shall never forget while I live the thrill that passed through the audience. I seemed to feel that it was approaching me, seemed to feel when it reached and embraced me. That was a theme all could comprehend, and rich for us all in a thousand delightful suggestions and associations; and, strangers as we were, the hearts of the vast assembly seemed melted into one as we listened to those swelling tones.

My brethren, I wish it might always be so with us when one begins to speak to us of Jesus. There is many a subject of public discourse that well deserves our attention. Especially the topics drawn from the Bible and usually presented from the pulpit are all important and should all be interesting. Whatever pertains to God and his province, to his gracious dealings with man in the past, and his purposes of mercy for the future, whatever to the condition and wants of our race as sinful and immortal, should awaken our minds and impress our hearts. Difficult and mysterious as some of these topics are, they are useful; and if we resist the temptation to wander into speculation or descend into secularity, they will give us pleasure and do us good. But Jesus-it is a theme which all alike can understand, in which all alike are profoundly concerned, a theme associated with all the sweetest recollections of our spiritual life, with all the brightest hopes of our immortal future. Ah! we are perishing and helpless sinners, and it ought to thrill through our very hearts, to link us in living sympathy, and kindle our souls into a glow of love and joy to hear of Jesus, our divine, our loving, our precious Saviour. It ought to be not mere poetry, but the true expression of genuine feeling, when we sing,

Jesus, I love thy charming name;
'Tis music to mine ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heaven might hear.

RASA - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:16

{2}

And my text today treats of Jesus.

The Jewish Christians to whom this Epistle was addressed were strongly urged, both in the way of persecution and persuasion, to apostatize from Christianity, and return to Judaism. Among the arguments employed for this purpose, it was urged that Christianity had no priesthood, no sacrifice or temple, and so was really no religion at all. The inspired writer of this Epistle meets these arguments, and, in fact, turns them into proofs of the superiority of Christianity. Thus, in regard to the priesthood, he shows that Christianity has a priest, a great High Priest, immensely superior to the Levitical priesthood. His office is held forever. He has offered, once for all, the wonderful sacrifice of himself, which is forever sufficient. He has passed through the heavens into the true sanctuary, bearing his own precious, atoning blood. Then Christianity is superior in this, as in other respects, to Judaism, that is, to the Mosaic dispensation if regarded as complete in itself, and designed to be permanent; and so the sacred writer urges his brethren not to apostatize, interspersing everywhere throughout his arguments the most earnest exhortations to hold fast their profession, the most solemn warnings of the guilt and

d ruin of apostasy. For us as well as for them, grievous is the guilt and hopeless the ruin of abandoning the gospel of Christ, our sole hope of salvation.

One of the points he makes to prove this superiority of Christ and Christianity, is that from which the text is an inference. The Levitical priesthood was held by many persons in succession, "because that by death they were hindered from continuing"; but Jesus, "because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The phrase translated "to the uttermost" signifies "perfectly," "completely"; he can save completely, can complete the salvation of them that come unto God through him. And the thought of the text is that he is able to complete their salvation, because he ever lives to intercede for them.

Re: RASA - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:18

{3}

Perhaps we are accustomed to look too exclusively to the Saviour's atoning death, not dwelling as we should upon the idea of his interceding life. See how the apostle speaks in Romans: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And again: "Christ Jesus that died, yea rather that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." He who loved us and gave himself for us ever liveth to accomplish the objects for which he died; as the mediatorial priest, he is ever interceding for the salvation of them that come unto God through him; as the mediatorial king, having all authority given unto him in heaven and earth, he controls all things so as to carry forward to completion the work of their salvation.

My brethren, it is just such a Saviour that we need. From the first moment when we approach God through him, onward through life, and in a certain just sense onward without end, we continually need God's mercy and grace for the Saviour's sake. If we dwell on this, we shall be better prepared to rejoice that our great High Priest ever lives to intercede for us, and thus can complete our salvation.

1. We are tempted. And what hope have we of conquering temptation, save "through him that loved us"? Remember what our Lord said to his disciples, with regard to the sore temptations that would soon befall them: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." As Satan is described as seeking permission from that Sovereign Ruler, without whose permission all his might and his malice are powerless, to tempt Job with peculiar trials, in the hope that he could bring him to renounce the Lord, so here as to the disciples: "Satan asked to have you"-and the term, as well as the connection, shows that he was permitted to have them, "that he might sift you as wheat."

Jesus himself is represented by John the Baptist as engaged in a similar process: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." But how different is the object in the two cases! Satan sifts with the hope of showing that all is really worthless, for it only for destruction. Jesus sifts in order to separate the precious from the vile, and preserve the pure wheat for the garner of heaven. And often what Satan meant as a sifting for evil is overruled by the stronger power so as to be for good.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:20

{4}

How was it with Peter? The Saviour said: "But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not"; and though his faith momentarily gave way, it did not utterly give out. I am not excusing Peter at all. We may be sure he never forgave himself. It was a sad and shameful fall; but Jesus had made supplication for him; and how different the result in his case from that of Judas. He, too, was one of those whom Satan obtained to sift them, and the result proved him to be all that Satan could wish. When he saw the consequences of his horrid crime, and had time to reflect upon it, he was sorry; but it was not the tender grief of a truly penitent heart which would have brought him back with humble submission-it was the sorrow of the world that worketh death-it was remorse that drove him headlong into self-destruction. But Peter, when the cock crowed after his third denial of his Lord and that injured one turned and looked upon him, Peter went out and wept bitterly, with the sorrow "that worketh repentance unto salvation," the sorrow of a deeply humble and really loving heart. There was

as a great change from that time in Peter, for the Lord had prayed for him, and divine grace not only preserved him from utter spiritual ruin, but overruled his own dreadful wickedness to his spiritual good.

Observe with what special emphasis the Saviour's intercession for the tempted is spoken of in this Epistle. The persons therein addressed were, as we have seen, peculiarly and sorely tempted—tempted even to forsake Christianity, through which alone they could find salvation; apart from which "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversary." The Jewish high priest, being taken from among men, "could bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity." So our great High Priest took upon him human nature partly for this very reason, that he might sympathize with the tempted, and that we might feel sure he does sympathize. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, as he is able to succor them that are tempted."

It is because of his atoning sacrifice and sympathizing intercession that we are urged to hold fast our profession as Christians, and encouraged to come to God with entire confidence. This is done in words that have been very dear to tempted hearts in every age since the holy man of God spake them as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. "Having, then, a great High Priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:22

{5}

Ah! mighty, to the most favored, are the temptations of life. Many belong to all periods; others mark some special season. Many are "common to man"; others belong to some particular condition or calling. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness"; yea, and its own trials, and its own weakness. Be this our support—our Saviour lives, he sympathizes with us, he intercedes for us; let us draw near unto God through him, unto God who has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

2. But many times, sad as is the confession, we yield to temptation, we sin; and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Must we then despair? Must the hopes we had cherished be abandoned, and this new sin be the terror of our souls? Listen! The apostle John wrote an Epistle for the express purpose of restraining his brethren from sin; yet he does not cut off those who are conscious they have sinned from the hope of forgiveness and salvation. He says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

Now we know what an advocate was, according to the usages of the Roman law, and is among ourselves, viz.: one who undertakes the management of another's case in court, and pleads his cause. So Jesus is our advocate with the Father. But, as in other cases where spiritual things are illustrated by temporal, the analogy is not perfect; there are differences. Our advocate does not argue that we are innocent, but confessing our guilt, pleads for mercy to us; and he does not present our merits as a reason why mercy should be shown us, but his merits. "He is the propitiation for our sins." His atoning death does, as it were, render God propitious, or favorable to sinners. Not that God is unwilling to show favor to poor sinners, and only prevailed on to do so by the death and intercession of his Son. Oh no! far from it. "Herein is love," says John in the same Epistle, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It was because God loved us, and wanted us to be saved, that he devised this way of saving us. And God is made propitious, favorable to us, not when he is made willing to save, but when it is made right that he should save us, and therefore we need not die, but may have everlasting life.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:22

{6}

When a sinner is pardoned, simply for the sake of the atoning and interceding Saviour, there is in that no encouragement to God's creatures to sin, as if it were a little thing and could be readily passed over, but a most solemn and impressive exhibition of the dreadful evil of sin, since it was only through the atonement and intercession of the only-begotten Son of God that any sinner could be forgiven, an exhibition at once of God's love to the perishing, and of his justice, that "will by no means clear the guilty."

Bearing in mind the difference between the pleading of our great advocate and any parallel which human affairs presents, we may look at a story of Grecian history, which has been often used to illustrate the Saviour's intercession. The poet Aeschylus had incurred the displeasure of the Athenians. He was on trial before the great popular tribunal, consisting of many hundreds of citizens, and was about to be condemned. But Aeschylus had a brother, who had lost an arm in battle - in the great battle of Salamis, where the Greeks fought for their existence against the Persian aggressors. This brother came into the court, and did not speak words of entreaty, but letting fall his mantle, he showed the stump of his arm, lost in his country's defense, and there stood until the Athenians relented, and Aeschylus was suffered to go free. So, my brethren, imperfect and unworthy as is the illustration, so we may conceive that when we are about to be condemned, and justly condemned for our sins, our glorious Brother stands up in our behalf, and does not need to speak a word, but only to show where he was wounded on the cross,

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me;
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:24

{7}

Here, then, is hope for us. "If any man sin," much as he ought to deplore it, he need not despair. Our advocate with the Father ever liveth to make intercession for them that come unto God through him, and through him we may find mercy. And here is no encouragement to sin, but the very contrary. If we truly trust in, truly love our interceding Lord, we shall be supremely anxious for his dear sake to turn from sin, to live for him who died for us; yea, who ever lives as our Saviour

3. This suggests another respect in which is seen our need of our Lord's perpetual intercession. We make such slow progress in attaining holiness-holiness, which is the noblest thing men can aspire to-holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord." Many a Christian, as he sorrowfully sees how often he yields to temptation, how his character breaks down afresh where he thought it had grown most firm, is at times inclined to think it impossible that he should ever become really holy.

But remember how Jesus prayed the night before his atoning death, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Think you that he, who ever lives to intercede for his people, does not still pray this prayer, that they may be sanctified and kept from the evil? Do you doubt that he prays for them still, as he did when on earth? His people's wants have not changed, and as for him, he is "the same yesterday and today and forever." Find me a young man far from his home whose mother used to pray for him when they were together, and try to make him believe that she does not pray for him still. "No, no," he would say, "if she is living, she prays for me."

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:39

{8}

Brethren, he who prays for us "ever lives." When the Jews gathered at the temple on the great day of atonement, and the high priest went into the holy of holies to pray for the people and himself, did the people doubt whether he was praying? Why, for that very purpose he had withdrawn from their view. So for that very purpose our High Priest has entered "not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us." And do not say that the Jewish high priest was absent but a few minutes, while it is long since Jesus went away. On the scale of the ages it is but a little while since he entered the heavenly sanctuary, having "been once offered to bear the sins of many," and any moment he may "appear a second time apart from sin unto salvation." Let us be sure that while absent he perpetually carries on his work of intercession.

Think of him, then, as still praying, "Sanctify them in the truth. Keep them from the evil." In all our disheartening failures to keep good resolutions, even when we may be tempted to think it scarce worth while for us to try to be holy, let us remember that Jesus prays for us, and, "forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press toward the mark." Ah! brethren, though it might often seem to us the bitterest irony now for a man to call you and me the saints of the Lord, yet, if indeed we are in Christ, and thus are new creatures, we have but to trust in his intercession for the sanctifying Spirit, and earnestly strive to "grow in grace," and we shall make progress; yea, sadly imperfect as is now our conformity to the Saviour's beautiful image, "we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." O burdened spirit, crying, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" be sure to add, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Saviour will continue to intercede, the Spirit will help your infirmities, and you shall at last be pure from sin, and safe from temptation to sin, a saint of the Lord forever.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:40

{9}

4. When we are in sorrow it is a blessed thing that Jesus ever lives to pray for us. He was himself while on earth, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And he showed the truest, tenderest sympathy with the sorrows of others. Who does not think at once of that touching scene at Bethany? "Jesus wept," in affection for the departed, in sympathy with the bereaved. And presently, standing by the tomb, he said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." Then he had been praying, asking that he might be able to raise Lazarus from the dead. We do not expect him now to pray that miracles may be wrought in behalf of the bereaved. We do not expect him now to give back the buried brother to his sisters, or to the widowed mother her only son. But shall it not be a consolation to us all in our afflictions, to feel assured that he now intercedes for us; that now, too, the Father hears him, and that by the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, this affliction shall work for us glory? And though we cannot now see his tears, nor hear his loving voice, as did the mourners at Bethany, neither do we need to send a messenger many miles, and wait, day after day, and go forth into the suburbs to meet him; he is everywhere alike near, and ever ready to pray for us to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God.

5. When we come to die, he is "alive forevermore." One of his servants, when near to death, saw "heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," where he represents and intercedes for his people. And so in departing he committed his spirit to him, as now exalted and glorious and ready to receive it. And so, amid all the cruel injustice and suffering, he was calm and forgiving. And so, though they were stoning him to death, "he fell asleep." Oh, whenever you are called to die, brother, and however, whether among loving friends in your pleasant home, or far away in loneliness and want, whether with ample forewarning or in the suddenness of a moment, think of your interceding Saviour standing on the right hand of God, and say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and you too shall fall asleep.

6. Even this is not the end of his work for his people. There shall be a "redemption of the body." Many have been sad during the time of war, because the bodies of their loved ones lie so far away, lie perhaps undistinguished among the huge masses of the unnamed dead. But he who receives the departing spirit to himself will also care for the mouldering body.

His resurrection is a pledge of the glorious resurrection of his people. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who through Jesus have fallen asleep, will God bring with him." "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." Then, the spirit reunited with the risen and glorified body, "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/12 12:42

{10}

And he who saved them will be ever living to keep them safe, unto all eternity. My friends, how shall we think of Jesus? What conception shall we cherish of him whom "having not seen, we love," who ever liveth to intercede for us? Many centuries ago, on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, toward Bethany, twelve men stood together, one talking to the others. Presently he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and with hands still uplifted, and words of blessing still lingering on his lips, he was parted from them and rose toward heaven, till a cloud received him out of sight. Years passed, and one of the eleven was an exile on a lonely island. It was the Lord's day, and he was in the Spirit. Hearing behind him a mighty voice that seemed to call him, he turned, and lo! one like unto the Son of Man, it was the Saviour who had parted from him long years before. He was arrayed in robes of majesty, and girt about with a golden girdle; his whole head shone white as snow with celestial glory; his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters; and his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength. Yes, the feet that once wearily trod the dusty roads of Judea now shone like molten brass. The eyes that were full of tears as he gazed upon doomed Jerusalem now gleamed as a flame of fire. The countenance that writhed in agony as he lay prostrate on his face in the garden, that was streaked with the blood that fell from his thorn-pierced brow, was now as the sun shineth in his strength. And the voice as the voice of many waters-it was the same voice that in gentleness and love had so often encouraged the sinful and sorrowing to draw near-it is the same voice that now calls us to come unto God through him, and declares that he is able to save us completely, since he ever lives to intercede for us.

O my hearer, slight all the sounds of earth, all the voices of the universe; be deaf to the thunder's mighty tones, and stand careless amid "the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds"-but oh, slight not the loving voice of Jesus.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid130>) John A. Broadus

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/20 10:17

Beware of the pride of reasoning; The true guide to knowledge is love.

LETTER XXX.

Beware of the pride of reasoning; the true guide to knowledge is love.

Your mind is too much occupied with exterior things, and still worse, with argumentation, to be able to act with a frequent thought of God. I am always afraid of your excessive inclination to reason; it is a hinderance to that recollection and silence in which He reveals Himself. Be humble, simple, and sincerely abstracted with men; be recollected, calm, and devoid of reasonings before God. The persons who have heretofore had most influence with you, have been infinitely dry, reasoning, critical, and opposed to a true interior life. However little you might listen to them, you would hear only endless reasonings and a dangerous curiosity, which would insensibly draw you out of Grace and plunge you into the depths of Nature. Habits of long standing are easily revived; and the changes which cause us to revert to our original position are less easily perceived, because they are natural to our constitution. Distrust them, then; and beware of beginnings which, in fact, include the end.

It is now four months since I have had any leisure for study; but I am very happy to forego study, and not to cling to anything, when providence would take it away. It may be that during the coming winter I shall have leisure for my library, but I shall enter it then, keeping one foot on the threshold, ready to leave it at the slightest intimation. The mind must keep fasts as well as the body. I have no desire to write, or speak, or to be spoken about, or to reason, or to persuade any. I live every day aridly enough, and with certain exterior inconveniences which beset me; but I amuse myself whenever I have an opportunity, if I need recreation. Those who make almanacs upon me, and are afraid of me, are sadly deceived. God bless them! I am far from being so foolish as to incommode myself for the sake of annoying them. I would say to them as Abraham said to Lot: Is not the whole land before thee? If you go to the east, I will go to the west. (Gen. xiii. 9.)

Happy he who is indeed free! The Son of God alone can make us free; but He can only do it by snapping every bond; an

d how is this to be done? By that sword which divides husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister. The world is then no longer of any account; but, as long as it is anything to us, so long our freedom is but a word, and we are as easily captured as a bird whose leg is fastened by a thread. He seems to be free; the string is not visible; but he can only fly its length, and he is a prisoner. You see the moral. What I would have you possess is more valuable than all you are fearful of losing. Be faithful in what you know, that you may be entrusted with more. Distrust your intellect, which has so often misled you. My own has been such a deceiver, that I no longer count upon it. Be simple, and firm in your simplicity. "The fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.) We shall vanish with it, if we make ourselves like it by reason of vanity; but the truth of God remains forever, and we shall dwell with it if it alone occupies our attention.

Again I warn you, beware of philosophers and great reasoners. They will always be a snare to you, and will do you more harm than you will know how to do them good. They linger and pine away in discussing exterior trifles, and never reach the knowledge of the truth. Their curiosity is an insatiable spiritual avarice. They are like those conquerors who ravage the world without possessing it. Solomon, after a deep experience of it, testifies to the vanity of their researches. We should never study but on an express intimation of Providence; and we should do it as we go to market, to buy the provision necessary for each day's wants. Then, too, we must study in the spirit of prayer. God is, at the same time, the Truth and the Love. We can only know the truth in proportion as we love--when we love it, we understand it well. If we do not love Love, we do not know Love. He who loves much, and remains humble and lowly in his ignorance, is the well-beloved one of the Truth; he knows what philosophers not only are ignorant of, but do not desire to know. Would that you might obtain that knowledge which is reserved for babes and the simple-minded, while it is hid from the wise and prudent. (Matt. xi. 25.)

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid434>) Francois Fenelon

Re: fenelon - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/9/20 10:48

Thanks Mike for this reminder! I love Fenelon. I have his little book "Let Go" and it always inspires me. I love his writing on the danger of always wanting to gain more "knowledge"(not God's wisdom). There is definitely a balance here and I find that if I am to study or read, the Lord will lead me to just the right thing. Sometimes I just get gluttonous for more knowledge just out of discontentment- and then I usually get led astray.

In His love, Chanin

Re:, on: 2004/9/20 13:43

The words of Fenelon are worth gold, especially amidst the theological reasoning and bitter critiques commonly found among us.
Hanna

Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/20 14:23

Dear Mike,
Thank you for digging up this treasure!

Dear Hanna,
You are absolutely right when you make the following statement:
Â“The words of Fenelon are worth gold, especially amidst the theological reasoning and bitter critiques commonly found among usÂ”.

I would like to lift forth the following piece:

Â“Again I warn you, beware of philosophers and great reasoners. They will always be a snare to you, and will do you more harm than you will know how to do them good. They linger and pine away in discussing exterior trifles, and never reach the knowledge of the truth. Their curiosity is an insatiable spiritual avarice. They are like those conquerors who ravage the world without possessing it. Solomon, after a deep experience of it, testifies to the vanity of their researches.Â”

Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/29 5:53

Some general suggestions...

There are some gems that pop up through this great feature; "**Random Article**" on the right hand side of the main page.

The key to catching them is to be quick because every time you move on to another page it is refreshed and another takes its place.

I keep a shortcut icon of Windows Notepad on my desktop and pull it up for items like this amongst others. Copying and pasting the link for later viewing.

Grabbed this one by the hem before it got away:

The Chained Ambassador

Samuel Logan Brengle

My soul was stirred within me the other morning by Paul's appeal for the prayers of the Church, in which he declares himself to be "an ambassador in bonds" or as the margin reads, "in a chain."

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in bonds" (Eph. 6:18-20).

You know what an ambassador is—a man who represents one government to another. The person of such a man is considered sacred. His word is with power. The dignity and authority of his country and government are behind him. Any injury or indignity to him is an injury and indignity to the country he represents.

Now Paul was an ambassador of Heaven, representing the Lord Jesus Christ to the people of this world. But instead of being respected and honored, he was thrust into prison and chained between two ignorant and probably brutal, Roman soldiers.

What stirred me were the quenchless zeal of the man and the work he did in the circumstances. Most Christians would have considered their work done or at least broken off till they were free again. But not so with Paul. From his prison and chains, he sent forth a few letters that have blessed the world, and will bless it to the end of time. He also taught us that there is a ministry of prayer, as well as of more active work. We live in an age of restless work and rush and excitement, and we need to learn this lesson.

Paul was the most active of all the Apostles -- "in labors more abundant" -- and it seemed as if he could ill be spared from the oversight of the converts and the new church which he had so recently opened, and which were in such desperate circumstances and surrounded by implacable enemies. But as he was set to be the chief exponent of the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, so he was set to be the chief exponent of its saving and sanctifying power under the most trying conditions.

It is difficult if not quite impossible to conceive of a trial to which Paul was not subjected--from being worshipped as a god to being whipped and stoned as the vilest slave. But he declared that none of these things moved him. He had learned in whatsoever state he was to be content (Phil 4:11), and he triumphantly wrote at the end of his life: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). He did not backslide. He did not even murmur, but kept on his way, trusting in the love of Jesus and through faith in Him, coming off more than conqueror.

Many Christians have fairly well learned the lessons of activity taught us by Paul, but it will be well for us to be prepared to learn the lessons taught us by his imprisonment. Doubly important is it for sick and resting officers to learn these lessons. They get impatient of waiting, are tempted to murmur and repine, and imagine that they can do nothing. But the fact is, God may possibly use them more widely in prayer and praise, if they will believe and rejoice and watch and pray in the Holy Ghost, than He used them at the head of a battalion of Christian soldiers. They should watch unto prayer for those who are at work and for those in need of the salvation of God. I write from experience.

continued...

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/29 5:56

For eighteen months I was laid aside with a broken head. God put His chain on me, and I had to learn the lessons of a passive ministry of prayer and praise and patience, or backslide altogether. It seemed as if I should never be able to work any more. But I did not backslide. God helped me to nestle down into His will, and like David to behave and quiet myself as a child weaned of his mother, until my soul was even as a weaned child (Ps.131:2).

Yet my heart longed for the glory of God and the salvation of nations. I prayed and watched reports of the salvation war and studied the needs of some parts of the world and prayed on until I knew God heard and answered me. My heart was made as glad as though I had been in the thick of the fight.

During that time I read of a great country, and my heart ached and burned and longed for God to send salvation there. In secret and in family prayer I poured out my heart to God, and I knew He heard and would yet do great things for that dark, sad country. Shortly after this, I learned of dreadful persecutions and the banishment of many simple, earnest Christians to this country. While I was greatly grieved at their sufferings, yet I thanked God that He was taking this way to get the fight of His glorious salvation into that loveless, needy land.

The fact is, sick and resting workers and saints of God can move Him to bless the Church and the world if they have faith and will storm Heaven with continuous prayers.

Transcending Chains Through Payer

There are more ways to chain God's ambassadors than between Roman soldiers in Roman dungeons. If you are hopelessly sick, you are chained. If you are shut in by family cares and claims you are chained. But remember Paul's chain, and take courage.

I sometimes hear Christian workers who have deserted their posts and become so entangled that it is impossible for them to get back into Christian work, lamenting their sad fate, and declaring they can do nothing. Let them bow beneath the judgment of God, kiss the hand that smites them, no longer chafe under the chain that binds them, but cheerfully, patiently begin to exercise themselves in the ministry of prayer.

If they are faithful, God may yet unloose their chain, and let them out into the happier ministry of work. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage and missed the mighty blessing he should have had. Still he got a blessing (Gen. 27:38-40).

If a man really longs to see God's glory and souls saved rather than to have a good time himself why should he not content himself to lie on a sick bed, or stand by a loom and pray, as well as to stand on a platform and preach, if God will bless one as much as the other?

The platform man can see much of his work and its fruit. The praying man can only feel his. But the certainty that he is in touch with God and being used by Him may be as great or greater than that of the man who sees with his eyes. Many a revival has had its secret source in the closet of some poor washerwoman or blacksmith who prayed in the Holy Ghost, but who was chained to a life of desperate daily toil.

The platform man gets his glory on earth, but the neglected, unknown or despised chained ambassador who prayed will share largely in the general triumph. It may be he will march by the King's side, while the platform man comes in behind.

God sees not as man sees. He looks at the heart, and regards His children's cry, and marks for future glory and renown and boundless reward all those who cry and sigh for His honor and the salvation of men.

God could have loosed Paul, but He did not choose to do so. But Paul did not grumble or get sulky or fall into despair or lose his joy and peace and faith and power. He prayed and rejoiced and believed and thought about the poor little struggling churches and the weak converts he had left behind him. He wrote to them and bore them on his heart and wept over them and prayed for them night and day. In so doing he saved his own soul and moved God to bless ten thousand times ten thousand folks whom he never saw and of whom he never even dreamed.

But let no one called of God to the work imagine that this lesson of the chained ambassador is for those who are free to go. It is not. It is only for those who are in chains.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid135>) Samuel Logan Brengle

Edit: I cannot even begin to say how much this speaks to my present condition especially; '*If you are shut in by family cares and claims you are chained.*' Suspect there very well may be others in similar situations, may it be an encouragement to them as much as it is to me.

In this present case, "random" seems to be a misplaced word :-)

Re: Random Article strikes again! - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/12/19 23:18

Harry Ironside

An excerpt,

Night after night I attended the meetings, speaking on the street and indoors, and I soon noticed (and doubtless others did too) that a change came over my "testimonies." Before, I had always held up Christ, and pointed the lost to Him. Now, almost imperceptibly, my own experience became my theme, and I held up myself as a striking example of consecration and holiness! This was the prevailing characteristic of the brief addresses made by most of the "advanced" Christians in our company. The youngest in grace magnified Christ. The "sanctified" magnified themselves. A favorite song will make this more manifest than any words of mine. It is still widely used in Army meetings, and finds a place in their song or hymnbooks. I give only one verse as a specimen:

*The people I know don't live holy;
They battle with unconquered sin,
Not daring to consecrate fully,
Or they full salvation would win.
With malice they have constant trouble,
From doubting they long to be free;
With most things about them they grumble;
Praise God, this is not so with ME!*

Will the reader believe me when I say that I sang this wretched doggerel without a thought of the sinful pride to which it was giving expression? I considered it my duty to continually direct attention to "my experience of full salvation," as it was called. "If you don't testify to it, you will lose the blessing," was accepted as an axiom among us.

In two parts:

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewarticle&aid10275>) HOLINESS: THE FALSE AND THE TRUE - PART 1 OF 2

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewarticle&aid10276>) HOLINESS: THE FALSE AND THE TRUE - PART 2 of 2

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/12/19 23:22

Quote:

-----Grabbed this one by the hem before it got away

hahhaha praise God! your awesome brother Mike.. yes I love how there is so much truth hidden away in the almost 15,000 text articles, poems, hymns... praise God for the spiritual truths we can learn that are found in this section. You have dug up and caught some great principles :)

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/1/15 0:43

Another one...

~~~~~

When you open a Bible, you see at once that it is made up of many shorter books. Do you wonder how people decided which books should be in the Bible?

It was important for Christians to know which works were true scriptures and which weren't. For one thing, they needed to know what teachings they should follow. For another, they needed to know what writings they should protect if they had to, because they didn't want to be tortured or killed for trying to save a book that wasn't God's word. About a hundred and thirty years after Christ's resurrection, bishops began making lists of the writings that they regarded as scripture. Their lists were usually close to each other but did not always agree exactly with one another.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewarticle&aid7126>) January 7, 367 • Athanasius Listed Writings with Power to Help.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/1/15 3:49

If you want to do a bit of background reading on this topic you might like to read The New Testament Documents; are they reliable?" by F F Bruce.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/1/15 10:12

Ron, you find the greatest links!

A snippet;

*"It is, indeed, difficult to restrict a discussion of the New Testament writings to the purely historical plane; **theology insists on breaking in.**"*

Indeed!

Rather fond of F.F. Bruce. Have another one of those 'priceless' bargain books that end up on the discount table;

Jesus

'Past, Present & Future; The Work Of Christ'

F.F. Bruce

~~~~~

F.F. Bruce (1910-1991) was Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, England, and a leading evangelical biblical scholar. Widely esteemed for his numerous and scholarly biblical studies and commentaries on the New Testament, behind the scenes he regularly devoted himself to teaching the Bible to laypeople.

~~~~~

Other recommended works from him?

Random Article strikes again! AWT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/2/12 19:49

THE HUMBLE PLACE

I have met two classes of Christians; the proud who imagine they are humble, and the humble who are afraid they are proud! There should be another class: the self-forgetful men and women who leave the whole thing in the hands of Christ and refuse to waste any time trying to make themselves good. They will reach the goal far ahead of the rest. The truly humble person does not expect to find virtue in himself, and when he finds none he is not disappointed. He knows that any good deed he may do is the result of God's working within him. When this belief becomes so much a part of any man or woman that it operates as a kind of unconscious reflex, he or she is released from the burden of trying to live up to the

opinion they hold of themselves. They can relax and count upon the Holy Spirit to fulfill the moral law within them. Let us never forget that the promises of God are made to the humble: the proud man by his pride forfeits every blessing promised to the lowly heart, and from the hand of God he need expect only justice!

A.W. Tozer

**Random Article strikes again! Richard Owen Roberts - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/2/23 1:12**

### Cycles of Revival

A very easy way to come to grips with the biblical teaching on revival is to approach it from the standpoint of cycles of history.

In your imagination, picture a very long line that begins with the creation of man in the book of Genesis and continues on until the end of the present age, sometimes in our unknown future. Let us call this imaginary line the norm. A cycle of history consists of crossing this line twice; once going down and a second time going up.

#### The Cycles In The Old Testament

Consider this question, "At the time of creation, was man above or below this imaginary line?" Every indication is that prior to his fall man enjoyed a relationship of great beauty and intimacy with God which was vastly above the normal relationship of man with God in subsequent times. But Eve sinned and Adam joined her. Suddenly their intimacy with God was lost and their relationship plunged below the line. From that point in Genesis until the close of Malachi it is possible to trace numerous cycles in which God's people experienced a return to God and a still later departure from Him.

The book of Judges provides tremendous help in understanding these cycles. Please note the pattern as established in chapter two. Stage One: The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the Elders who survived Joshua (vs.7). Stage Two: When Joshua died (vs 8), the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, serving the Baals and forsaking the Lord, the God of their fathers (vss 11-13). Stage Three: The anger of the Lord burned against them under righteous judgement, delivering them into the hands of their enemies. Whenever they went the hand of the Lord was against them for evil and they were severely distressed (vss 14-17). Stage Four: When the judgement was so heavy and the oppression so great that they could no longer handle it, they groaned under the burden and cried unto the Lord (vs.18b). Stage Five: When the cry was of great anguish and from their hearts, God raised up a judge who delivered them from the hands of their enemies (vs 18a), and the people again served the Lord their God and enjoyed a season of rest. But the cycle started all over again, for when that judge died, they turned their backs on God and acted more corruptly than their fathers in following other gods to serve them, and bow down to them (vs 19). Thus, once more the anger of the Lord burned against Israel (vss 20-21).

With a little care you can see this cycle clearly repeated seven times in the next fourteen chapters:

Under Othniel (3:1-11);  
Under Ehud (3:12-31);  
Under Deborah (4:1-5:31);  
Under Gideon (6:1-8:35);  
Under Abimelech (9:1-57);  
Under Jephthah (10:6-12:7) and  
Under Sampson (13:1-16:31).

In addition to these seven, there were several other cycles during this period which are not so distinctly delineated.

Similar patterns appear throughout the other historical books of the Bible from First Samuel to Nehemiah, enabling us to say that there are many full cycles of history in the Old Testament. But what about the New Testament?

#### The Cross-over And Peak In The New Testament

Some, who are aware that the subject of revival is so much more prominent in the Old Testament than in the New, have concluded that revival is indeed an Old Testament phenomena and not something to be found in the New Testament nor to be looked for in this present age of grace. This error of interpretation can be easily exposed by examining the question, "How many full cycles exist in the New Testament?"

We begin by asking, "Where does the New Testament begin, above or below the norm?" We know that the New Testament was preceded by that period which has been denominated "the four hundred years of silence" -- that long stretch of

time in which there is no recorded evidence of God having spoke to man. We know that John the Baptist spoke severely to the religious leaders of his day saying "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3: 7). We know that Christ came to His own and His own received Him not (John 1:11). Certainly, the evidence is ample that at the New Testament opened below the line.

Is it no clear that the people of God were moved way above the norm when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost? In one day about three thousand were baptized, all; believers were of one mind, taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people (Acts 2:43-47).

But where, in relationship to this line, did the New Testament close, and how many full cycles appear in the New Testament? Clearly, it closed above the line and obviously, there was less than one full cycle in the entire New Testament! While we know that numerous warnings in the Epistles predict a descent below the line, and the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3) fortify these warnings, the New Testament Church remained above the norm.

There is indeed a most precious sense in which the New Testament must be described as revival at its highest and at its best. Thus, instead of concluding that revival is not at all a New Testament theme, it can be described as the grandest theme of all the New Testament -- God drawing near to His own people through Immanuel -- God with us.

Since the New Testament days it is easy to observe the cycles of history as it is in the Old Testament. Just in the history of the United States of America alone, several full cycles are clearly evident. The same can be said for the United Kingdom.

#### The Church Today At A Low Point

But what does all this teach us about where we are today, and how can it help us?

Consider again the great lesson of the Book of Judges. A season of revival brings the people of God into a restored relationship with their Father. But when that people sin and will not repent, God Himself brings them under His righteous judgment. Surely that is where the Church in the western world is today. We have sinned grievously against God. Think of the terrible pride of evangelicalism! Consider the spirit of stubbornness and rebellion that mars so much of the work of the Church in the age of decadence! Ponder the terrible unbelief that marks both the conduct and the practice of the vast portions of professed believers. Realize that millions of people have been led to a false hope of salvation by the grievously distorted and paltry teaching and preaching so popular today. Surely these sins, not to mention innumerable others, are an affront to our holy God and sufficient to have brought the wrath of God upon an entire generation.

But do the evidences of God's righteous judgments upon us -- in the form of restraining the stirring of His heart and compassion toward us (Isaiah 63:15); the withdrawal of His manifest presence and the delivering us up to the power of our own iniquities (Isaiah 74:7); the forcing us to drink the wine of His wrath to the point of spiritual drunkenness (Jer. 13:12-14); the visitation of earthquakes, floods, fires, storms, and hosts of other indicators of His wrath -- have the desired effect? Are we crying out to God for mercy? Do the groaning of our burdened hearts reach the throne of the Almighty? Apparently not yet!

Oh, to be sure, there are some individuals here and there who are under an immense burden of concern and imploring God to come among us in power. Infrequently one does learn of a local congregation somewhere that is weeping before the Lord as it seeks His face; but by-and-large the Church seems to indicate that things are not so bad but what one more committee, or one more new and innovative program, or some new approach not yet tried, will rescue us from our difficult circumstances. How much worse must things become before the whole Church begins to cry out to God?

#### The Lack Of A Cyclical Pattern

Have you ever wondered if there is any fixed pattern in these cycles of history? Are the moral and spiritual declines uniformed in their depths? Are the upturns or revivals consistent in the peaks they reach? Is there any uniformity in the length of the cycles and the periods of time between revivals?

For an answer, consider the history of the revivals in the United States. In the earliest days of settlement in the New England Colonies in the 1600's there were several gracious seasons of revival. A powerful movement of the Spirit gripped much of the then existing nation between approximately 1732 and 1770. Another great revival began about 1792 and continued in various waves into the 1840's. The mighty prayer revival gripped much of the nation in 1857 and 1858. Another revival occurred during the Civil War. Some parts of the nation were touched by revival in 1905-1906 as a spill-over of the mighty work of God in Wales.

Yet, since that time we have seen little more than localized movements touching small and scattered elements of our society. In truth, we have not had a large-scale nation-wide revival for considerably more than a century.

And what about the peaks and troughs? From all appearances, there is no pattern. The times, depths, and peaks vary, manifesting the creative ways of our sovereign God. We may say, however, that the current decline goes to shocking depths, so much so that many wonder if the nation can ever turn upward toward God again.

#### Hope And Cry For Deliverance

Ought we to despair? Absolutely not! Is there no hope? There is abundant reason for hope! The judgements we are under are gracious and remedial! Will we heed them? Will we yet cry unto God for deliverance? Indeed, what will you personally do?

Will you let the evidences of where we are as a nation move you to appropriate action? Will you, as a believing individual, cry unto God day and night, "Turn us again, Oh God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80: 3,7,19). Will you encourage your church to heed the call of II Chronicles 7:14 to humble itself, pray, seek his face, and turn from its wicked ways? Will you stand firmly with others who are calling the nation of churches to cry earnestly unto God in seasons of humiliating repentance, fasting and prayer?

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid107>) Richard Owen Roberts

#### **RASA ~ The Heresy of Christendom - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/2/26 21:46**

##### **The Heresy of Christendom**

Peter Ainslie

I have only to remind you of one single fact, and that is that Christianity is a reality. It can no more express itself in dogmas and creeds than can human blood pulsate through books and dusty archives.

The aim of Christianity is to elevate character, to purify conduct, to perpetuate goodness, and to make men in the express image of the Father; but religious definitions and correct orthodoxy have been so prominent in the minds of churchmen that, when the English poet said,

"We have preached Christ for centuries,  
Until at last men learn to scoff,  
So few seem any better off."

he was expressing the world's contempt for dogmas and creeds, by the side of the world's incomparable need of benevolence. When Christ was asked what was the one test by which you would know true teachers from the false, it was not, "By their doctrines you shall know them," as many would have us think in these days, but, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Artists have painted pictures of Christ bearing the cross up the slope of Calvary and pathos breaks down in tears when we see him fallen beneath that cross; but heavier than the cross of Christ is the theology of men. The cross of Calvary was laid upon him by the unsympathetic soldiers of the Tower of Antonia. That heavier cross of theology has been laid upon him by those whom history has called his friends, but I think that of the marks upon him of the latter cross, he will say, "These are the wounds that I received in the house of my friends."

Christianity is true, or it would long ago have perished in the theologies of men, as weak streams have perished in desert sands. In spite of the difficulties of its human prison-house, it has worked marvelous changes in the soul-soil of our race, and it has lifted characters of the redeemed to such heights in holiness that the robes of angels have clothed them and light from the throne has crowned them; but darker than the noonday of crucifixion have been the clouds of opinions of men about the person of Christ. The world could only see the darkness of the clouds. It is no surprise that a French statesman cried in despair, "Christ has come, but when cometh salvation?" The world looked towards Calvary and they saw only the cross of orthodoxy. They asked for bread and they were given a stone; they asked for a fish and they were given a serpent; but God can not be confined in orthodoxy, for he is larger than the church and his heart is wider than the hearts of theologians. The generation which has already risen to take our places will certainly pass judgment upon the church of this generation unless she becomes as sensitive to the practice of benevolence as she is to the belief in correct orthodoxy.

doxy. The generation wants the gospel of brotherhood, kindness and help. It will not ask for charity, but it will ask for Jesus Christ, disrobed of human thought, for the Christianity of victory is not to be identified with what Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Campbell or what any other man has thought. It must have the God of human companionship, whose disciples bear the fruit of unstinted benevolence, else that generation will repeat what history has done and make its own God.

continued

**Re: RASA ~ The Heresy of Christendom - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/2/26 21:49**

Continued

Along with the establishment of Christianity in Jerusalem was a distinct program to care for the dependent and the aged. It is as vital as the commission that Jesus gave for the evangelization of the world. It is as distinct a part of the Christian life as personal holiness. It is one of the chief pillars that uphold the divine structure of the church of God. It was as much a part of the apostolic church as faith, repentance and baptism. We have sought to restore that church in doctrine and practice. I do not doubt that we have made known the plan of salvation as clearly as Peter, or Paul, or Timothy; but this is only one phase of the apostolic church. Not until we have established as a practice among ourselves those benevolences of the apostolic church as we have established the practice of faith, repentance and baptism, can we claim that holy place of apostolic reproduction.

I know that it is said among us, as an excuse for our dereliction of duty, that we are a new people, that we have been busy evangelizing, and that we have not had the wealth for the building of orphanages and homes for the aged; but I beg to say that none of these excuses suffice. I have no more respect for these answers than I have for the Roman Catholic reason for not reading the Bible. We are not too new a people to practice Christian benevolence, neither can it be said that we have not the wealth, if the apostolic church is to be our model. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached the first gospel sermon, three thousand responded to his message and were baptized that day, and in the evening they sold their possessions to help those in need. Before they went out to evangelize Judea or Samaria, they appointed deacons to look after the needy. Before they erected a church building, they had established a system of benevolence. It was as much a part of the church life as that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and had it not been a church of that type, it would have perished before the wrath of Nero, Domitian or Diocletian.

A movement that holds out its hand to help the orphan, the poor and the aged can not be defeated in this world. It has in it the pulse-beats of immortality. Its song is the song of the brook, and its music is like the music of the rustling of the corn. Since it has begun to flow, it will not cease, and all hearts are touched by its appeals. While we are threshing out our theological differences, the cry of the orphan or the stumbling steps of the aged make us forget our differences and bring us into a common kinship. When there will still be theological divergences, the Christian forces of benevolence will have united into a common service for the good of all. In these sweet, warm influences the church will stack arms, and peace will flow through all her channels like the tides flow through the sea, for this is the highway of victory. We sweep over nearly nineteen hundred years, and if to us belongs one thing above another, it has been said that is the discovery of the Book of Acts. Be that as it may, but is it not true that our discovery has largely been a phase of the Book of Acts? Here it is a fact that the plan of salvation is clearer than elsewhere in all the Scriptures, but by the side of this plan of salvation is the plan of benevolence so grand, magnificent and all-embracing that the church has rarely been able to comprehend its power and beauty. In the advancement of the chariot of His redemption, if one wheel of that chariot was world-wide missions, the other was world-wide benevolence. Our missionaries on the foreign field have caught this vision, for by the side of the chapel they have planted an orphanage or a hospital. Let us, who sit in the darkness, rekindle our fires, and see that what is necessary for the conquest of China, India and Japan is likewise necessary for the conquest of America. Say what you will about the Roman Catholic Church, and I hate her heads and all her heathen appendages, as Cardinal Newman termed them, but I passionately love her orthodoxy in caring for the orphan. It has been the strongest pillar in upholding that church and saving it from decay.

Amid the clashes of creeds and one generation making orthodox what another had declared heresy, I do not hesitate to say that indifference to benevolence in all ages has been the great heresy of Christendom. On the departure of the church from that cardinal principle, the door was opened for all kind of heresies; and when you read church history, you read the history of a church that is largely prodigal, because one of the chief sources of her life was almost closed. It is no surprise that worldly aggrandizement became her policy; but the religion of Jesus Christ is not in great church buildings, pipe-organs and pulpit oratory, but pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is to recognize the wants of the orphan and the aged as the wants of Christ himself, and go speedily to the help of Him who helped us out of sin into the light of pardon. By the side of faith in the Book must be unstinted practice of the Book. I care little about higher criticism or lower criticism, so long as this heresy is permitted to exist in Christendom with so little concern for its abolition.

It is as much our duty to think seriously of our obligation to the orphan and the aged as it was to think seriously of our obligation to be baptized. As to whether distress is more universal now than in former years, is a question we need not consider. Suffice it for duty and our sympathy that there is distress, and the sight of the needs of the orphan and the aged is the appeal from Christ himself. They are here in his stead, and through them he receives our ministries. Then, "deal thy bread to the hungry, cover the naked with thy garment, hide not thyself from thine own flesh, build up the broken-hearted, set at liberty them that are bruised. Then thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths to dwell in."

No service is more beautiful in all the pale of human activities than taking hold of the hand of the orphan and guiding his tender feet into the paths of righteousness. That child holds within himself the forces of manhood that are mightier than a university. All unconscious of his strength, he has within himself the sunshine of heaven and the life of God is there.

Our National Benevolent Association is not simply building orphanages of stone and mortar, but when these shall have crumbled into dust amid the last conflagration there still will be remaining their real buildings, which are characters built out of fatherless and motherless boys and girls--characters strong and beautiful, that but for our National Benevolent Association might have been weak and worthless--characters that will have given muscle to our nation and adornment to our church; but the care of the aged is no less beautiful. The storms have swept over their paths, yet not fierce enough to lay them beneath the sod, but there they stand without home or friends, broken in life, aching in heart. The ploughshare of sorrow has cut great gullies in their faces, and their hands are hard from the years of toil. Tired of the burden of life, their staff has broken, and our Christian Benevolent Association goes to their rescue and becomes a staff to the stumbling, a home to the homeless and a friend to the friendless. I do not disparage our missionary work nor our educational work; both are necessary for the maintenance of our service, but equally necessary is the unstinted practice of benevolence. Every believer should be unreservedly pledged to this practice as he is pledged to the Lord Almighty. The myriad of angels that look upon the trembling steps of childhood and the stumbling steps of the aged, and from whom sometimes seems to come the unseen angelic hand, must covet the task that has been given to believers. It calls for our full identification with a cause that is divine. It means that the gospel of help has indeed become the gospel of practice, and he is living in heresy who is living without sympathy for this cause. Before the New Testament was written, benevolence was the practice of the church. It came in the morning of its strength and purity, and fellowship with the saints of Pentecost can come only through the practice of the principles of Pentecost.

As distinctly as baptism is immersion of the whole body, deeper still our baptism means the surrender of the whole body and its possessions. What is money for if it is not for the use of all? That was the conception of the apostolic church. It must be the conception of the church again if it would be apostolic. "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto Jehovah;" "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your boom." On the call for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, Moses received more than enough. About 170 years ago, when Saurin preached a sermon on benevolence, men gave all the money in their possession and women heaped up the collection-plate with their jewels. We depreciate the religion of the French of the last century, but this is inappropriate until we of this century shall have learned to give like those of the last century. The opportunities for money-making should not eclipse the opportunities for money-giving, yet the last decade reveals the fact. Serious issues are facing American Christianity, and with it are facing the Disciples, and we can only meet these conditions successfully in a full acceptance of the whole revelation of God. Because we are freer from human creeds, our opportunities for service are necessarily greater, and except we measure up to these divinely given opportunities, the tree, which God has planted in the garden of this new continent, shall bear the frost of the coming century. Distinctly as the call of Jesus from the cross to John the beloved disciple, to care for his weeping mother, is the sacred call to care for the orphan and the aged, the sick and the disabled, that we may be "unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid313>) Peter Ainslie



**RASA~ The Gospel - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/7 8:42**

A little preface here. For those newer or just otherwise, on the main page to your left, about midway down is a function called "**Random Article**" which time and again proves the incredible and vast riches that are contained throughout this site. You must be quick though, if you click off to another area, the "page" refresh's and a new article takes it's place.

It's become kind of like checking your side view mirrors before making a lane change. Often times will glance over at it, catching it in the peripheral as it creeps into my lane, so to speak, hence the "**Random Article Strikes Again**". Got sided swiped again this morning...

**RASA~ The Gospel (Cont.) - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/7 8:46**

(Was hard *not* to post the whole thing, so...it's the whole thing)

**The Gospel**

**DON'T BE A DUCK**

In a famous ecclesiastical trial in Virginia, a number of years ago, it was said by someone that the preaching of the party on trial "had no more effect than pouring water on a duck's back." Quick as a flash the reply came, "Is that the fault of the water, or the duck?" There is food for thought in that home thrust; and so let us all go to church, next Sunday, praying for the preacher, asking God to "open our hearts," as He did the heart of Lydia, that we may attend unto the things that are spoken.

-- Central Presbyterian.

**EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL**

God never repairs. Christ never patches. The Gospel is not here to mend people. Regeneration is not a scheme of moral tinkering and ethical cobbling. What God does, He does new-- new heavens, new earth, new body, new heart -- Behold, I make all things new." In the Gospel, thus we move into a new world and under a new scheme. The creative days are back again. We step out of a regime of jails and hospitals and reform shops. We get live effects direct from God. That is the Gospel. The Gospel is a permanent miracle. God at first hand -- that is miracle. The Gospel thus does not classify with other schemes of amelioration. They are good, but this is not simply better, but different, distinct, and better because distinct; it works in a new way, and works another work. Compare the wrought chains riveted on the demoniac, and the divine word working a new creation in the demoniac. It is all there. It is like the difference between the impotent Persian lashing the turbulent sea with chains, and the gracious Lord saying to the troubled sea, "Peace, be still!"

**RESULT OF ONE SERMON**

Dr. Antliff was preaching special sermons in the chapel at Wolstanton, a pleasant village in the Tunstall Circuit. In one of his discourses, touching upon the tendency of preachers to underestimate the possible results of services at which there was only a small congregation, he gave an illustration from his own experience. Some years ago he went to preach in a small Derbyshire village, and found he had to preach in a farmhouse kitchen. The congregation was composed mainly of a number of boys and other young people. He accordingly addressed himself to children, and then prayed with and for the boys then present, and thought that several of them appeared impressed and interested. On returning home at night his wife said, "Well, Samuel, what sort of a day have you had?" "Only a poor day," he replied, "hardly anybody present but a few boys." "But," said the doctor, "God has graciously blessed that service. One of the boys, who dates his conversion from that afternoon, is now a Wesleyan minister, Rev. (giving a well known name); two more of those boys (giving their names) are now Primitive Methodist ministers." As he mentioned these names a young minister in the congregation became deeply moved, and rising and interrupting the preacher, said, with tears rolling down his face, "Forgive my intruding on your sermon, Dr. Antliff, but I am another of those boys who were led to Christ at that service in the farmhouse kitchen." The young man who thus testified is now doing noble ministerial service at one of the stations within a mile or two of Wolstanton.

**TURN TO THE LIGHT**

A weary and discouraged woman, after struggling all day with contrary winds and tides, came to her home and, flinging herself down into a chair, said:

"Everything looks dark, dark."

"Why don't you turn your face to the light, aunty dear?" said a little niece who was standing near.



The words were a message from on high, and the weary eyes were turned toward Him who is the light and the life of men, and in whose light alone we see light.

"Turn your face to the light," oh, weary watcher! You have looked, and longed, and struggled in the darkness without avail; now turn your glance the other way; "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give unto us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and if we will look toward the light, we shall find blessing and peace all along the way, and even amid darkness and shadows shall rejoice in hope of the glory of God, the light of an unsetting day.

-- The Christian

#### HOW TO DESTROY THE BIBLE

First, get rid of all the copies in all the languages -- there are 160,000,000 copies, say, of the Old and New Testaments in one book and in portions of the book -- you must have all these piled together into a pyramidal mass and reduced to ashes before you can say you have destroyed the Bible. Then go to the libraries of the world, and when you have selected every book that contains a reference to the Old and New Testaments, you must eliminate from every book all such passages; and until you have so treated every book of poetry and prose, excising all ideas of grandeur and purity and tenderness and beauty for the knowledge and power of which the poets and prose writers were indebted to the Bible -- until you have taken all these from between the bindings and turned them to ashes, leaving the asculated fragments behind -- not until then have you destroyed the Bible. Have you done it, then? Once more. Go to all the courts of law, and, having sought out the pandects and codes, you must master every principle of law, and study what it may have derived from the Old and New Testaments, and have all such passages removed from the codes of jurisprudence. You must then go to the galleries of art throughout the world, and you must slash and daub over and obliterate the achievements that the genius of the artist has produced -- not until then have you destroyed the Bible.

Have you done it then? What next? You must visit every conservatory of music, and not until the world shall stand voiceless as to its masters, not until then have you destroyed the Bible. Then you must visit the baptistries of the churches, and from the baptismal rolls you must erase all Christian names -- the names of John and Mary -- for they suggest the Scriptures, and the register is stamped with the Bible. Have you done it then? No. There is one thing more you must perform. There is one copy of the Bible still living. It is the cemetery of the Christian. The cemeteries, while they exist, are Bibles, and to suppress the book, to let not a trace of it be discovered, you must pass from grave-stone to grave-stone, and with mallet and chisel out every name that is biblical, and every inspiring passage of Scripture graven thereon. To destroy the Bible you must also blot from the memory of every Christian its promises and comforts. Not till you have done all this can you destroy the Bible.

#### THE LONGEST DAY

It is quite important, when speaking of the longest day in the year, to say what part of the world we are talking about, as will be seen by reading the following list, which tells the length of the longest day in several places. How unfortunate are the children in Tornea, Finland, where Christmas Day is less than three hours in length!

At Stockholm, Sweden, the longest day is eighteen and one-half hours in length.

At Spitzbergen the longest day is three and one-half months.

At London, England, and Bremen, Prussia, the longest day has sixteen and one-half hours.

At Hamburg, Germany, and Dantzic, Prussia, the longest day has seventeen hours.

At Wardbury, Norway, the longest day lasts from May 21 to July 22, without interruption.

At St. Petersburg, Russia, and Tobolsk, Siberia, the longest day is nineteen hours, and the shortest five hours.

At Tornea, Finland, June 21 brings a day nearly twenty-two hours long, and Christmas one less than three hours in length.

At New York the longest day is about fifteen hours, and at Montreal, Canada, it is sixteen

But the longest day of all will be in the New Jerusalem; for "there shall be no night there."

-- The Evangel.

### THE KEY TO HIS HEART

I had at one time a class of promising boys, with one exception. One of the nine was considered the worst boy in the school. As rough, untutored specimen of a boy as ever was.

I made the same appeals to John that I did to the others, and there is just where I erred. I pointed out his rough, careless ways, and urged him to give himself to God; but I never studied him; I never searched for his heart, to know what was in it; I never tried to find the link between his soul and Heaven.

John was a great trouble in the school. He spoiled the other boys, and annoyed the superintendent by keeping up a general disquiet.

Time and again, the superintendent used to come to me, saying, "Can you do nothing with John? Can you make no appeal to his heart?"

"Heart!" I answered. "John is without a heart, so far as I can judge."

There was one thing about the boy that I had noticed, without making any inquiry concerning it; and that was, that he always brought his own old Bible -- a worn, ragged copy; and when he could be persuaded to read, never read from any other. Occasionally, I urged him to use a newer copy, but he steadily refused, and always slipped his ragged Bible into his pocket at the close of the session.

One Sabbath I missed John from his usual place. "Now, boys," I said, "we may expect a quiet, profitable time, since our tormentor is not with us."

In a moment, I felt in my heart that I was rebuked, and I would have given much to have seen my troublesome scholar's shaggy head restlessly moving about before my eyes. Was this the spirit of my Master? Was I a fit keeper for that soul? What had I succeeded in doing for him all along? A sense of my utter unworthiness and uselessness took possession of me. In vain I took up the lesson and attempted to teach. The scholars were dull and indifferent, and I had no power to interest them. The lesson was a failure, and I was relieved when it was finished.

Two weeks passed. Each Sabbath I expected to see John, but he never came again. One evening of the third week of his absence, a woman, carelessly dressed, weeping bitterly, came to my house.

"Are you John Wesley's Sabbath School teacher, sir?" she asked.

"I am," I replied.

"Oh, then, sir, our John's a-dyin'! He didn't like to send for you, because he said he'd been a bad boy. But he longed and longed, and watched the door, sir, hopin' you'd come in. I couldn't stand his looks; so tonight, I just slipped off without sayin' a word to him. Oh! won't you come with me to see him?"

I made no answer, but snatching my hat, blindly hurried out beside her, and spoke not a word till I stood at the bedside of the worse boy in school. How changed he was! His old, restless air was quite gone.

"My boy!" I exclaimed through choking tears.

He turned his filmy eyes upon me, and made an effort to speak, but failed. I knelt and prayed aloud in bitter agony of soul; prayed most for myself; for had I not sinned more than this boy? Then I held tight the hand of John, and yearned over him with unutterable sorrow.

"He was wild, poor boy!" said the mother sobbing: "but I missed training him right. But he had his soft ways, too. You see that little, old Bible by his pillow?" I looked and saw the same old copy which he had read in school.

"Well," continued his mother, "that used to belong to his sister. She had read it over and over again, and sometimes read bits of it to Johnny. She died very happy, and Johnny kept her Bible. But he got more reckless, after she was gone. When he was very bad at times, I used to remind him of little Mary's Bible, and it softened him. Since he's been sick, he would have the book by him all the time."

And there was poor John's history -- all bound up in that little volume! At last I had discovered his heart. All that long time the key to it had been carried about with him. One word about Mary's Bible might have suddenly given me the secret workings of his soul. But that word I had never uttered.

John died, his hand held in mine.

Friends, I believe my scholar is in Heaven. I know that the Holy Spirit came in just where I failed, and performed the work in John's heart at last. But I still carry with me a wholesome regret; and I write this that you may be warned in time, that every scholar has a heart, and that it is discoverable.

#### THE LAST REQUEST

It was at the close of a hard fought day when death from the cannon ball, death from the rifle bullet, and death from the bayonet thrust had laid low many a brave man, that a stalwart soldier, rifle in hand, knelt on one knee, beside a dying comrade.

Hand clasped in hand the two men held their last interview. It was very brief and the crack of the rifle and the boom of the distant gun mingled with the solemn word that passed. "George," said the dying man, "you will see the folks at home, though I shall not. Will you take them a message for me?" "I will faithfully, Fred," said his friend. "I feel my time is short," said Fred, as he pressed his arm on a wound from which the life blood was slowly but surely flowing; "but I should like to send some consolation to the home where they will weep for me." "You may trust me, Fred," said the kneeling soldier, who, strong and manly as he was, could scarcely repress his tears. "If I live to see the dear old village again, I will surely take your message."

"Thank you, old boy. I am sure you will. You know what I was when I left home, a wild, careless boy without a serious thought in my head. Well, my mother gave me a Bible when I came away and I promised to read it. You know we had to go to church and Sunday School when we were boys, but afterward I did not go when I could avoid it. Mother grieved, I know; and she was afraid that when I was away I should come to harm. But I read the Book every day, George tell her that at -- I was among a wild lot and I was careless, but I always found a chance to keep my promise. And the dreadful scenes we have seen have sobered me. I always thought I should get knocked over in some of our fights, as I have, and the thought, though it did not unman me, made me serious. At times I have heard the hymns we used to sing at school, 'Around the throne of God in Heaven,' and 'I think when I read' -- you remember them, George? Well, I fancied I could hear them above the music of the drum and fife. Odd scraps of sermons, too, have come in my mind at times, and though I did not care for them when I heard them, they have had a new light with the boys dying around us.

"Well, George, I prayed, too, and I have had some talk with the chaplain and -- my dear, old boy, I am dying fast, I cannot see your face now, it is growing dark all around - don't loose my hand, George, I cannot say all I wanted to, but go to my mother and tell her I am a Christian. Tell her I died trusting in Jesus and sure that He will receive me on the shining shore we used to sing about. Tell her I could see --"

But George never told Fred's mother what her boy could see as he lay dying. He told her all beside, but when he had told her that, he had to tell her that a bright flash of joy shot across his face, and he fell back speechless in the arms of death. The old Christian lady shed many tears over her son's death, but the message his friend carried to her was the best consolation she could have had, and it was with a happy face that she said, as the sorrowing king said in the hour of his bereavement: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

#### THE DAY THAT BABY DIED

A poor, little, faded woman had been brought into court as a witness in a very disagreeable case, involving very serious issues. The entire case depended on the fact that a paper had been signed on a certain day, and this the forlorn little woman was prepared to prove.

"You saw the paper signed?" asked the opposing counsel in cross-examination.

"Yes, sir.

"You take your oath that it was the 30th of August?"

"I know it was, sir."

The lawyer, who thought another date could be proved, assumed an exasperating smile, and repeated her words:

"You know it was! And now be so good as to tell me just how you know it."

The poor, little woman looked from one to another with wide, sorrowful eyes, as if she sought understanding and sympathy. Then her gaze rested on the face of the kindly judge. "I know," she said, as if speaking to him alone, "because that was the day that baby died."

#### THE BACKWOODSMAN'S THRILLING STORY

Special services were being conducted in the East of London recently, and at one of the meetings an old man desired that the well-known children's hymn, commencing -- "I want to be an angel," might be sung. In compliance with the request the hymn was sung, and the impression made was of a most encouraging character. Many present were touched with the simplicity and tenderness of the words, and most felt that they would like to enter into "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." Among those who remained for prayer was the old man himself, and he was completely broken down. Christian friends present inquired how it was that he was so affected by the hymn, as he had been on the Lord's side for a number of years, and knew that when death came he would "enter in through the gates into the City." He replied:

"Many years ago I was living in the backwoods of America, and, although far away from companions, my life was a very happy one. A loving wife and little daughter were the sunshine of my home, and made even bush life far from monotonous. I was not, however, a Christian, and felt quite unconcerned about my soul's salvation. Death, however, came into my home, and took away my wife. I then began to think seriously about the importance of decision for Christ, and reconciliation to God. But, alas! I did not yield to the strivings of the Spirit, and, in order to deaden my impressions, and to silence my conscience, I gave way to drink and day after day I became worse.

"Thus I was going headlong towards perdition. My little daughter was neglected, and, furthermore, forbidden even to read her Bible or attend the Sunday School, some three miles distant, and which was presided over by a Christian missionary. In my drunken fits I treated her most cruelly, and threatened that I would shoot her if she crossed the threshold of the Sunday School any more. With a cry of sorrow she would say, 'Father, I do love Jesus! I do love my teacher! and I do so want to go to Heaven when I die! I hope you will let me go to school.' My heart was not in the least affected by her pleadings, but rather hardened, and I resolved that if she would insist upon going I would punish her severely. The following Sunday, however, on my return home, I found that she was absent, and being almost mad with drink, I took down my gun and made for the direction from which she would come.

"On meeting my child I at once leveled the gun, but was stopped from firing by her entreaties. On perceiving that I fully intended to commit this diabolical act, she cried, 'Stop a minute, father; I want to pray;' and after a few words of simple prayer, she sang the following verse --

"I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,  
A crown upon my forehead,  
A harp within my hand.  
There with the blood-bought children,  
So glorious and so bright,  
I'll make the sweetest music  
And praise Him day and night."

"Then, oh, how can I repeat it! I shot her -- my child. The act sobered me, and realizing what I had done, I lost consciousness. On my recovery I seemed to hear the voice of God, saying, 'The fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' For many days and nights I was in a most distressed state of mind lest God's judgment should come upon me, and that I should have my part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. But I cried unto the Lord for mercy, and He heard my cry and saved my soul, and now I want all present to thank God for His goodness."

\* \* \* \* \*

One day last week a man on his way to the station to take a train, passing a fine old mission, saw smoke issuing from the

e roof. He rang the bell and told the servants that the house was on fire. They laughed at him. Having done his duty, he went on to the train. Thirty minutes afterward the flames burst out and the edifice was destroyed. How oft the friendly voice that warns the reckless boy is laughed at. It was always so. When Lot warned his friends to flee out of Sodom, we are told that "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." But the end came then, and ever will, to a life of sin, sooner and far more terribly than any warning voice can depict.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid487>) George Kulp

**Re: RASA~ Fix your eyes on Jesus - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/14 10:23**

**Fix your eyes on Jesus when you have too much to do**

Ten months after Ray and I were married we had baby Sherry.

Eleven and a half months later we had Margie.

Seventeen months later we had Buddy.

And immediately after that, Ray had a shrew for a wife.

My problem wasn't Ray or the babies; all four were adorable! My problem was no quiet time, no focus. My eyes weren't fixed on Jesus, they were fixed on what I had to do.

A work-centered life gets complex, and it leads to burnout. A Christ-centered life -- even in the midst of work -- stays basically simple, nourished and rested.

(When I got ornery enough to get desperate, I got back to Jesus again. Then little by little I didn't yell so much, and I guess Ray decided he could stick out being married to me after all.)

Learn from two of my weak areas:

One, especially in earlier days, sometimes I wasn't really as busy as I felt I was busy. The pressure I put on myself kept "overheating my motor" and making me feel pushed.

Two, I tended to feel crowded periods before they ever arrived, and to be tired just from anticipating them.

You see, our actual living is between our ears. If you're unhappy or anxious over what's happening or what's going to happen, that's what tenses your muscles and starts to erode you.

Then don't fix your eyes on what you have to do. When I've done that it's made me fragmented and harried.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord said, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better" (Luke 10:41-42).

Martha's problem wasn't cooking, it was the "many things." She was multi-directional, which always makes us oppressed, nervous, burdened, self-pitying, off-balance.

When your eyes are on Him you begin to develop a reflex action inside you -- it may take time -- that shuns what's complicating, what's overwhelming. You'll find you want to do less (but do the most important things) to become more.

Although truly, the more you become, the more you actually achieve. And then your life begins to have wider-ranging and longer-lasting effects.

Fix your eyes on Jesus! Like Mary, focus; that's what I had to learn. Become a "one-thing" person (Luke 10:42).

How do you do this?

First, begin to develop the habit of continual fellowship with Him (see chapter 18) in the midst of it all.

Second, determine to give Him the sacrifice of a regular "quiet time" (see chapter 19). Yes, it will be a true sacrifice. ("You will never find time for anything," says Charles Bixton. "If you want time you must make it.")

Third, give Him frequent spaces when you momentarily quit, relax, breathe deeply, stretch your body, and say, "Jesus, my eyes are on You. You are able. You are helping me from one moment to the next. I trust You."

As you seek to do those three things and release control to Him, He will make the hours stretch, bring others to help you, cancel some things you thought you had to do, show you duties you can delegate, show you duties which don't have to be done at all.

I didn't learn my lessons once for all. I've had to come back over and over to take seriously again His practical words,

Reverence for God adds hours to each day (Proverbs 10:27, TLB).

-----  
Let's pray to Him -- you and I, Anne Ortlund -- together:

Lord Jesus, according to Matthew 11:29, we take Your yoke upon us. We want to learn from You -- Creator, Producer, Worker, Achiever! Be our Model, and teach us Your rhythm for living, so that as we live, we'll find rest for our souls. In Your dear name, amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

For the weariest day  
May Christ be thy stay.  
For the darkest night  
May Christ be thy light.  
For the weakest hour  
May Christ be thy power.  
For each moment's fall  
May Christ be thy all.

--Old benediction

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid575>) Anne Ortlund

~~~~~  
(Loved this line: "*You see, our actual living is between our ears.*")

Re: RASA ~ (Oh My!) Weakness, strength, practice, knowledge - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/5/8 11:48

~~~~~  
**Weakness preferable to strength, and practice better than knowledge.**

LETTER XXIX.

Weakness preferable to strength, and practice better than knowledge.

I am told, my dear child in our Lord, that you are suffering from sickness. I suffer with you, for I love you dearly; but I can not but kiss the hand that smites you, and I pray you to kiss it lovingly with me. You have heretofore abused your health and the pleasures derived from it; this weakness and its attendant pains are the natural consequence of such a course.

I pray God only that He may depress your spirit even more than your body, and while He comforts the latter according to your need, that He may entirely vanquish the former. O how strong we are when we begin to perceive that we are but w

eakness and infirmity! Then we are ever ready to believe that we are mistaken, and to correct ourselves while confessing it; our minds are ever open to the illumination of others; then we are authoritative in nothing, and say the most decided things with simplicity and deference for others; then we do not object to be judged, and submit without hesitation to the censure of the first comer. At the same time, we judge no one without absolute necessity; we speak only to those who desire it, mentioning the imperfections we seem to have discovered, without dogmatism, and rather to gratify their wishes than from a desire to be believed or create a reputation for wisdom.

I pray God that He may keep you faithful to his grace, and that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. i. 6.) We must bear with ourselves with patience and without flattery, and remain in unceasing subjection to every means of overcoming our thoughts and inward repugnances; we shall thus become more pliable to the impressions of grace in the practice of the gospel. But let this work be done quietly and peacefully, and let it not be entered upon too eagerly, as though it could all be accomplished in a single day. Let us reason little, but do much. If we are not careful, the acquisition of knowledge will so occupy this life that we shall need another to reduce our acquirements into practice. We are in danger of believing ourselves advanced towards perfection in proportion to our knowledge of the way; but all our beautiful theories, far from assisting in the death of self, only serve to nourish the life of Adam in us by a secret delight and confidence in our illumination. Be quit then of all trust in your own power and in your own knowledge of the way, and you will make a great stride towards perfection. Humility and self-distrust, with a frank ingenuousness, are fundamental virtues for you.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid434>) Francois Fenelon

#### **Random Article Strikes Again ~ Lying: Secretiveness - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/6/30 16:36**

"... all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21: 8). Perhaps we are amazed at this verdict. But how could it be otherwise, for Satan is the "father of lies" (John 8: 44)? So all those who lie will come into his kingdom. That is why Jesus says to the Pharisees, whom He accused of lying, "How are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" (Matt. 23: 33). If Jesus places so much weight upon the sin of lying, if it will bring us into the kingdom of Satan, then we have to fight against it to the point of shedding blood and not give it any right to exist in our lives. It is a matter of being alert at the onset of the sin, when we begin to lie by twisting the facts, or exaggerating, or not wanting to bring our mistakes into the light and trying to cover them with silence or pretences. Covering up the facts begins when we only say half-truths, trying to protect our reputation.

Lies belong to the kingdom of darkness and usually go hand in hand with secretiveness. We usually say and do things secretly when our consciences tell us we should not, and when others would be right in accusing us. Because we do not want to break with our sin, we do not want anyone to discover the bad things we have done. That is why we do them in secret and do not want them to be revealed; we do not want to be judged.

Every time we do something in secret, because we do not want others to see what we are doing wrong, we have begun to lie. Then, if we are trapped, we try to get out of it by lying. That is why we should be careful not to do the slightest thing secretly. When we are tempted to do so, we must ask ourselves immediately: "Why should I not do it in front of others?" The answer is probably because there is something wrong about it. When the Jews accused Jesus, He answered, "I have spoken openly to the world. . . I have said nothing secretly" (John 18: 20).

Jesus could say this. He stands before us in His divine majesty. He is Light and Truth, and every true disciple of Jesus ought to be able to say, "Everything that I have said and done in my life can be heard and seen by everyone. I have said and done nothing in secret, because everything I have done was done in the sight of God."

Yes, Jesus is Light. That is His glory. His nature is pure light and truth. He has redeemed us to be children of light so that all our words and actions might be pure and transparent. If we speak and act in the sight of God, we will not do anything secretly, but will only do what can stand in the light of God. On the other hand, Satan is the liar, the lord of the kingdom of darkness. If we speak and act in the dark, secretly, and do not want our words and deeds to come into the light, we belong to Satan. So we are constantly confronted with small, hidden situations that make us decide between light and darkness. Jesus' words are very serious, "For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God" (John 3: 20).

We cannot remind ourselves of this often enough, because Satan in his craftiness always tries to tell us that covering up our sins is harmless. He sees to it that we cover up the truth before God and man, even before ourselves, and so make room for lies. We say we did not mean it that way. When we are criticized we give other motives for our actions but



these motives are not the true ones. We repress the true facts and are not conscious of the fact that we are on the way to lying, or that our lives are already riddled with lies. We lie out of fear, out of pride, out of desire to please our fellow men, and for other reasons.

But Jesus has redeemed us from these dark powers of secretiveness and lying and therefore He is waiting for us to claim this redemption and run to attain the prize (1 Cor. 9: 24): the City of God.

The City of God is utterly light. Liars will find its doors closed. That is why the apostles always say that we should be children of light and that light does not associate with darkness (Eph. 5:8-13). Light and darkness, truth and lies are mutually exclusive. If we are untruthful and secretive, we are excluded from the kingdom of light, from the Kingdom of God, as Scripture tells us (Rev. 21: 27). No matter what it costs, we must make a complete break with the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of lies. Otherwise we will lose our inheritance in the Kingdom of God, the fellowship of believers, and above all the fellowship with Jesus.

How do we become free from our disposition and inclination to do things secretly and to lie? The first step is to ask the Lord to show us the extent of this sin, which is satanic by its very nature, and to help us to abhor it. If we do not abhor it, we could very well manage to put up with it, and will not be interested in fighting against it. But we have to fight against it and not let it exist any longer. How can we do this? By unmasking the lies that we speak in haste, we deprive this sin of its powers over us. This happens when we immediately confess them to our own humiliation. Bringing them into the light sentences the sin of lying to death. Light has won and the humiliation has taken us out of Satan's sphere of influence, for he can only attack the proud and the haughty.

We have to apply the same tactics if we have done something secretly. We must unmask it and call it by name. If we have taken something away, we cannot put it back secretly, but, when we put it back, we must admit that we took it. But that's not the end. That only takes care of the sinful act. The sinful trait, lying, covering things up which is deeply rooted in us, will continue to live in us and when the appropriate situation materializes, it will manifest itself again. If we hate everything in us that is untruthful and if we sense that lies separate us from Jesus, we cannot do anything but call upon Jesus day by day-Jesus who is the Truth. Through His sacrificial death on Calvary He did nail the sin of lying to the cross and free us from it. It can no longer rule over us, because He has trodden it under His feet. Jesus, the Truth, reigns in us.

"I am redeemed; I have been set free for the truth!" That is how we should begin our battle of faith every day. And what we believe will come to pass. No matter how much we are inclined to lie, if we carry out this battle of faith, Jesus will make us utterly truthful, so that we can enter the city of light as children of light.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid53>) Basilea Schlink

#### **Random Article Strikes Again ~ J.C. Ryle - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/7/21 16:22**

Long, but seems to be a good balance to many recent discussions. Too hard to clip excerpts from...

J. C. Ryle

("The man of granite, with the heart of a child." 1816 - 1900)

#### **Warnings To the Churches - All Kinds of Strange Teachings**

"Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.

It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace,  
not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those  
who eat them" (Hebrews 13:9)

The text which heads this paper is an apostolic caution against false doctrine. It forms part of a warning which Paul addressed to Hebrew Christians. It is a caution just as much needed now as it was eighteen hundred years ago. Never, I think, was it so important for Christian ministers to cry aloud continually, "Do not be carried away."

That old enemy of mankind, the devil, has no more subtle instrument for

ruining souls than that of spreading false doctrine. "A murderer and a liar from the beginning. . . .your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Outside the Church he is ever persuading men to maintain outrageous customs and destructive superstitions. Human sacrifice to idols, gross revolting, cruel, disgusting worship of abominable false deities, persecution, slavery, cannibalism, child murder, devastating religious wars--all these are a part of Satan's handiwork, and the fruit of his suggestions. Like a pirate, his object is to "sink, burn, and destroy." Inside the Church he is ever laboring to sow heresies, to propagate errors, to foster departures from the faith. If he cannot prevent the waters flowing from the Fountain of Life, he tries hard to poison them. If he cannot destroy the remedy of the Gospel, he strives to adulterate and corrupt it. No wonder that he is called "Apollyon, the destroyer."

The Divine Comforter of the Church, the Holy Spirit, has always employed one great agent to oppose Satan's plans. That agent is the Word of God. The Word expounded and unfolded, the Word explained and opened up, the Word made clear to the head and applied to the heart. The Word is the chosen weapon by which the devil must be confronted and confounded. The Word was the sword which the Lord Jesus wielded in the temptation. To every assault of the Tempter, He replied, "It is written." The Word is the sword which His ministers must use in the present day, if they would successfully resist the devil. The Bible, faithfully and freely expounded, is the safeguard of Christ's Church.

I desire to remember this lesson, and to invite attention to the text which stands at the head of this paper. We live in an age when men profess to dislike dogmas and creeds, and are filled with a morbid dislike to controversial theology. He who dares to say of one doctrine that "it is true," and of another that "it is false," must expect to be called narrow-minded and uncharitable, and to lose the praise of men. Nevertheless, the Scripture was not written in vain. Let us examine the mighty lessons contained in Paul's words to the Hebrews. They are lessons for us as well as for them.

I. First, we have here a broad warning: "Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings."

II. Secondly, we have here a valuable prescription: "It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods."

III. Lastly, we have here an instructive fact: "Ceremonial foods are of no value to those who eat them."

On each of these points I have something to say. If we patiently plow up this field of truth, we shall find that there is precious treasure hidden in it.

1. First comes the broad warning. "Do not be not carried away by all kinds of strange teachings."

The meaning of these words is not a hard thing to understand. "Be not tossed back and forth," the Apostle seems to say, "by every blast of false teaching, like ships without compass or rudder. False doctrines will arise as long as the world lasts, in many numbers, with varying minor details, in one point alone always the same--strange, new, foreign, and departing from the Gospel of Christ. They do exist now. They will

always be found within the visible Church. Remember this, and do not be carried away." Such is Paul's warning.

The Apostle's warning does not stand alone. Even in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount there fell from the loving lips of our Savior a solemn caution: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Even in Paul's last address to the Ephesian elders, he finds time to warn his friends against false doctrine: "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

Note what the Second Epistle to the Corinthians says: "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Note what the Epistle to the Galatians says: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel." "Who has bewitched you?" "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" "How is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles?" "You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!" "I fear for you." "Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 1:6; 3:1, 3; 4:9, 10, 11; 5:1).

Note what the Epistle to the Ephesians says: "No longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching" (Ephesians 4:14). Note what the Epistle to the Colossians says: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Note what the First Epistle to Timothy says: "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1). Note what the Second Epistle of Peter says: "There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). Note what the First Epistle of John says: "Do not believe every spirit. Many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Note what the Epistle of Jude says: "Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 1:3, 4). These things were written for our learning.

What shall we say about these texts? How they may strike others I cannot say. I only know how they strike me. To tell us, as some do, in the face of these texts, that the early Churches were a model of perfection and purity, is absurd even in Apostolic days, its appears, there were abundant errors both in doctrine and practice. To tell us, as others do, that pastors ought never to handle controversial subjects, and never to warn their people against erroneous views, is senseless and unreasonable. If we did this then we would have to ignore most of the New Testament. Surely the dumb dog and the sleeping shepherd are the best allies of the wolf, the thief, and the robber. It is not for nothing that Paul says, "If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 4:6).

A plain warning against false doctrine is especially needed in the present day. The school of the Pharisees, and the school of the Sadducees, those ancient mothers of all mischief, were never more active than they are now.

--Between men adding to the truth on one side, and men taking away from it on the other.

--Between those who bury truth under additions, and those who mutilate it by subtractions.

--Between superstition and infidelity.

--Between Roman Catholicism and neology .

--Between Ritualism and Rationalism.

Between these upper and lower millstones the Gospel is near being crushed to death! Strange views are continually propounded by pastors about subjects of the deepest importance. About the atonement, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the reality of miracles, the eternity of future punishment, about the Church, the ministerial office, the Lord's Supper, Baptism, the confessional, the honor due to the Virgin, prayers for the dead. About all these things there is nothing too outrageous to be taught by some ministers in these latter days. By the pen and by the tongue, by the press and by the pulpit, the country is incessantly deluged with a flood of erroneous opinions. To ignore the fact is mere blindness. Others see it, even if we pretend to be ignorant of it. The danger is real, great, and unmistakable. Never was it so needful to say, "Do not be carried away."

Many things combine to make the present inroad of false doctrine peculiarly dangerous. There is an undeniable zeal in some of the teachers of error: their "earnestness" makes many think they must be right. There is a great appearance of learning and theological knowledge: many fancy that such clever and intellectual men must surely be safe guides. There is a general tendency to free thought and free inquiry in these latter days: many like to prove their independence of judgment, by believing novelties. There is a wide-spread desire to appear charitable and liberal-minded: many seem half ashamed of saying that anybody can be in the wrong. There is a quantity of half-truth taught by the modern false teachers: they are incessantly using Scriptural terms and phrases in an unscriptural sense. There is a morbid craving in the public mind for a more sensuous, ceremonial, sensational, showy worship: men are impatient of inward, invisible heart-work. There is a silly readiness in every direction to believe everybody who talks cleverly, lovingly, and earnestly, and a determination to forget that Satan often masquerades himself "as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). There is a wide-spread "gullibility" among professing Christians: every heretic who tells his story plausibly is sure to be believed, and everybody who doubts him is called a persecutor and a narrow-minded man. All these things are peculiar symptoms of our times. I defy any observing person to deny them. They tend to make the assaults of false doctrine in our day peculiarly dangerous. They make it more than ever needful to cry aloud, "Do not be carried away!"

If any one should ask me, What is the best safeguard against false doctrine?--I answer in one word, "The Bible: the Bible regularly read, regularly prayed over, regularly studied." We must go back to the old prescription of our Master: "Diligently study the Scriptures" (John 5:39). If we want a weapon to wield against the plans of Satan, there is nothing like "the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God." But to wield it

successfully, we must read it habitually, diligently, intelligently, and prayerfully. This is a point on which, I fear, many fail. In an age of hurry and activity, few read their Bibles as much as they should. More books perhaps are read than ever, but less of the one Book which makes man wise to salvation. The Roman Catholic Church and new theology could never have made such havoc in the Church in the last fifty years, if there had not been a most superficial knowledge of the Scriptures throughout the land. A Bible-reading congregation is the strength of a Church.

"Diligently study the Scriptures." Mark how the Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles continually refer to the Old Testament, as a document just as authoritative as the New. Mark how they quote texts from the Old Testament, as the voice of God, as if every word was given by inspiration. Mark how the greatest miracles in the Old Testament are all referred to in the New, as unquestioned and unquestionable facts. Mark how all the leading events in the Pentateuch are incessantly named as historical events, whose reality admits of no dispute. Mark how the atonement, and substitution, and sacrifice, run through the whole Bible from first to last, as essential doctrines of revelation. Mark how the resurrection of Christ, the greatest of all miracles, is proved by such an overwhelming mass of evidence, that he who disbelieves it may as well say he will believe no evidence at all. Mark all these things, and you will find it very hard to be a Rationalist! Great are the difficulties of unbelief: it requires more faith to be an unbeliever than a Christian. But greater still are the difficulties of Rationalism. Free handling of Scripture--results of modern criticism--broad and liberal theology--all these are fine, swelling, high-sounding phrases, which please some minds, and look very grand at a distance. But the man who looks below the surface of things will soon find that there is no sure standing-ground between ultra-Rationalism and Atheism.

"Diligently study the Scriptures." Mark what a conspicuous absence there is in the New Testament of what may be called the Sacramental system, and the whole circle of Ritualistic theology. Mark how extremely little there is said about the effects of Baptism. Mark how very seldom the Lord's Supper is mentioned in the Epistles. Find, if you can, a single text in which New Testament ministers are called sacrificing priests, or the Lord's Supper is called a sacrifice, or private confession to ministers is recommended and practiced. Turn, if you can, to one single verse in which sacrificial vestments are named as desirable, or in which lighted candles, and pots of flowers on the Lord's Table, or processions, and incense, and flags, and banners, and turning to the east, and bowing down to the bread and wine, or prayer to the Virgin Mary and the angels, are sanctioned. Mark these things well, and you will find it very hard to be a Ritualist! You may find your authority for Ritualism in garbled quotations from the Fathers, in long extracts from monkish, mystical, or from Popes; but you certainly will not find it in the Bible. Between the plain Bible, honestly and fairly interpreted, and extreme Ritualism there is gulf which cannot be passed.

"If we would not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings," we must remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Diligently study the Scriptures." Ignorance of the Bible is the root of all error. Knowledge of the Bible is the best antidote against modern heresies.

II. I now proceed to examine Paul's valuable prescription: "It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods."

There are two words in this prescription which require a little explanation. A right understanding of them is absolutely essential to a proper use of the Apostle's advice. One of these words is "foods," and the other is "grace."

To see the full force of the word "foods" we must remember the immense importance attached by many Jewish Christians to the distinctions of the ceremonial law about food. The flesh of some animals and birds, according to Leviticus, might be eaten, and that of others might not be eaten. Some foods were, consequently, called "clean," and others were called "unclean." To eat certain kinds of flesh made a Jew ceremonially unholy before God, and no strict Jew would touch and eat such food on any account. Now were these distinctions still to be kept up after Christ ascended into heaven, or were they done away by the Gospel? Were heathen converts under any obligation to attend to the ceremonial of the Levitical law about food? Were Jewish Christians obliged to be as strict about the foods they ate as they were before Christ died, and the veil of the temple was torn in two? Was the ceremonial law about foods entirely done away, or was it not? Was the conscience of a believer in the Lord Jesus to be troubled with fear lest his food should defile him?

Questions like these appear to have formed one of the great subjects of controversy in the Apostolic times. As is often the case, they assumed a place entirely out of proportion to their real importance. The Apostle Paul found it needful to handle the subject in no less than three of his Epistles to the Churches. "Food," he says, "does not bring us near to God." "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking." "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink." (1 Corinthians 8:8; Romans 14:17; Colossians 2:16). Nothing shows the fallen nature of man so clearly as the readiness of morbid and scrupulous consciences to turn trifles into serious things. At last the controversy seems to have spread so far and obtained such dimensions, that "foods" became an expression to denote anything ceremonial added to the Gospel as a thing of primary importance, any Ritual trifle thrust out of its lawful place and magnified into an essential of religion. In this sense, I believe, the word must be taken in the text now before us. By "foods" Paul means ceremonial observances, either wholly invented by man, or else built on Mosaic precepts which have been abrogated and superseded by the Gospel. It is an expression which was well understood in the Apostolic days.

The word "grace," on the other hand, seems to be employed as a comprehensive description of the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ. Of that glorious Gospel, grace is the main feature, grace in the original scheme, grace in the execution, grace in the application to man's soul. Grace is the fountain of life from which our salvation flows. Grace is the agency through which our spiritual life is kept up.

Are we justified? It is by grace.  
Are we called? It is by grace.  
Have we forgiveness? It is through the riches of grace.  
Have we good hope? It is through grace.  
Do we believe? It is through grace.  
Are we elect? It is by the election of grace.  
Are we saved? It is by grace.

Why should I say more? The time would fail me to exhibit fully the part that grace does in the whole work of redemption. No wonder that Paul



says to the Romans, "We are not under the law, but under grace;" and tells Titus, "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." (Romans 3:24; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2Thessalonians 2:16; Acts 18:27; Romans 1:15; Ephesians 2:5; Romans 6:15; Titus 2:11).

Such are the two great principles which Paul puts in strong contrast in the prescription we are now considering. He places opposite to one another "foods" and "grace" --Ceremonialism and the Gospel--Ritualism and the free love of God in Christ Jesus. And then he lays down the great principle that it is by "grace," and "not foods," that the heart is strengthened.

Now "strengthening of the heart" is one of the great wants of many professing Christians. Especially is it longed after by those whose knowledge is imperfect, and whose conscience is half enlightened. Such persons often feel in themselves much indwelling sin, and at the same time see very indistinctly God's remedy and Christ's fullness. Their faith is feeble, their hope dim, and their consolations small. They want to realize more tangible comfort. They fancy they ought to feel more and see more. They are not at ease. They cannot attain to joy and peace in believing. Where shall they turn? What shall set their consciences at rest? Then comes the enemy of souls, and suggests some shortcut road to establishment. He hints at the value of some addition to the simple plan of the Gospel, some man-made gimmick, some exaggeration of a truth, some flesh-satisfying invention, some improvement on the old path, and whispers, "Only use this, and you shall be strengthened." Plausible offers flow in at the same time from every quarter, like quack medicines. Each has its own patrons and advocates. On every side the poor unstable soul hears invitations to move in some particular direction, and then shall come perfect strength.

"Come to us," says the Roman Catholic. "Join the Catholic Church, the Church on the Rock, the one, true, holy Church; the Church that cannot err. Come to her bosom, and rest your soul in her protection. Come to us, and you will find strength."

"Come to us," says the extreme Ritualist. "You need higher and fuller views of the priesthood and the Sacraments, of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper, of the soothing influence of daily service, daily masses, confession to priests, and priestly absolution. Come and take up sound Church views, and you will find strength."

"Come to us," says the violent Liberationist. "Cast off the traditions and rules of established Churches. Enjoy religious liberty. Throw away forms and Prayer-books. Join our party. Cast in your lot with us, and you will soon be strengthened."

"Come to us," say the Plymouth Brethren. "Shake off all the bondage of creeds and Churches and systems. We will soon show you higher, deeper, more exalting, more enlightened views of truth. Join the brethren, and you will soon be strengthened."

"Come to us," says the Rationalist. "Lay aside the old worn-out clothes of unfruitful schemes of Christianity. Give your reason free scope and play. Begin a freer mode of handling Scripture. Be no more a slave to an ancient old world book. Break your chains and you shall be

strengthened."

Every experienced Christian knows well that such appeals are constantly made to unsettled minds in the present day? Who has not seen that, when boldly and confidently made, they produce a painful effect on some people? Who has not observed that they often beguile unstable souls, and lead them into misery for years?

"What does the Scripture say?" This is the only sure guide. Hear what Paul says. Heart strength is not to be obtained by joining this party or that. It comes "by grace, and not by foods." Other things have a "show of wisdom" perhaps, and give a temporary satisfaction "to the flesh." (Colossians 2:23). But they have no healing power about them in reality, and leave the unhappy man who trusts them nothing bettered, but rather worse.

A clearer knowledge of the Divine scheme of grace, its eternal purposes, its application to man by Christ's redeeming work, a firmer grasp of the doctrine of grace, of God's free love in Christ, of Christ's full and complete satisfaction for sin, of justification by simple faith, a more intimate acquaintance with Christ the Giver and Fountain of grace, His offices, His sympathy, His power, a more thorough experience of the inward work of grace in the heart, this, this, this is the grand secret of heart strength. This is the old path of peace. This is the true panacea for restless consciences. It may seem at first too simple, too easy, too cheap, too commonplace, too plain. But all the wisdom of man will never show the heavy-laden a better road to heart-rest. Secret pride and self-righteousness, I fear, are too often the reason why this good old road is not used.

I believe there never was a time when it was more needful to uphold the old Apostolic prescription than it is in the present day. Never were there so many weak and worried Christians wandering about, and tossed to and fro, from want of knowledge. Never was it so important for faithful ministers to set the trumpet to their mouths and proclaim everywhere, "Grace, grace, grace, not foods, establishes the heart."

From the days of the Apostles there have never been a lack of quack spiritual doctors, who have professed to heal the wounds of conscience with man-made remedies. In our own beloved Church there have always been some who have in heart turned back to Egypt, and, not content with the simplicity of our worship, have hankered after the ceremonial fleshpots of the Catholic Church of Rome. To hear the Sacraments incessantly exalted, and preaching played down, to see the Lord's Supper turned into an idol under the pretext of making it more honorable, to find plain worship overlaid with so many newfangled ornaments and ceremonies that its essentials are quite buried, how common is all this! These things were once a pestilence that walked in darkness. They are now a destruction that wastes in noonday. They are the joy of our enemies, the sorrow of the Church's best children, the damage of English Christianity, the plague of our times. And to what may they all be traced? The neglect and the forgetfulness of Paul's simple prescription: "Grace, and not foods, strengthens the heart."

Let us take heed that in our own personal religion, grace is all. Let us have clear systematic views of the Gospel of the grace of God. Nothing else will do good in the hour of sickness, in the day of trial, on the bed of death, and in the swellings of Jordan. Christ dwelling in our

hearts by faith, Christ's free grace the only foundation under the soles of our feet--this alone will give peace. Once let in self, and forms, and man's inventions, as a necessary part of our religion, and we are on a quicksand. We may be amused, excited, or kept quiet for a time, like children with toys, by a religion of "foods." Such a religion has "a show of wisdom." But unless our religion be one in which "grace" is all, we shall never feel strengthened.

III. In the last place, I proceed to examine the instructive fact which Paul records. He says, "Ceremonial foods are of no value to those who eat them."

We have no means of knowing whether the Apostle, in using this language, referred to any particular Churches or individuals. Of course it is possible that he had in view the Judaizing Christians of Antioch and Galatia, or the Ephesians of whom he speaks to Timothy in his pastoral Epistle, or the Colossians who caused him so much inward conflict, or the Hebrew believers in every Church, without exception. It seems to me far more probable, however, that he had no particular Church or Churches in view. I rather think that he makes a broad, general, sweeping statement about all who in any place had exalted ceremonial at the expense of the doctrines of "grace." And he makes a wide declaration about them all. They have got no good from their favorite notions. They have not been more inwardly happy, more outwardly holy, or more generally useful. Their religion has been most unprofitable to them. Man-made alterations of God's precious medicine for sinners, man-made additions to Christ's glorious Gospel, however superficially defended and plausibly supported, do no real good to those that adopt them. They confer no increased inward comfort; they bring no growth of real holiness: they give no enlarged usefulness to the Church and the world. Calmly, quietly, and mildly, but firmly, decidedly, and unflinchingly, the assertion is made, "Ceremonial foods are of no value to those who eat them."

The whole stream of Church history abundantly confirms the truth of the Apostle's position. Who has not heard of the hermits and ascetics of the early centuries? Who has not heard of the monks and nuns and recluses of the Roman Catholic Church in the middle ages? Who has not heard of the burning zeal, the devoted self-denial of Romanists like Xavier, and Ignatius Loyola? The earnestness, the fervor, the self-sacrifice of all these classes, are matters beyond dispute. But none who read carefully and intelligently the records of their lives, yes, some of the best of them, can fail to see that they had no solid peace or inward rest of soul. Their very feverish restlessness is enough to show that their conscience; were not at ease. None can fail to see that, with all their furious zeal and self-denial, they never did much good to the world. They gathered round themselves admiring partisans. They left a high reputation for self-denial and sincerity. They made men wonder at them while they lived, and sometimes canonize them when they died. But they did nothing to convert souls. And what is the reason of this? They attached an overweening importance to man-made ritual and ceremonial, and made less than they ought to have done of the Gospel of the grace of God. Their principle was to make much of "ceremony," and little of "grace." Hence they verified the words of Paul, "Ceremonial foods are of no value to those who eat them."

The very history of our own times bears a striking testimony to the truth of Paul's assertion. In the last twenty-five years some scores of clergymen have seceded from the Church of England, and joined the Church

of Rome. They wanted more of what they called Catholic doctrine and Catholic ceremonial. They honestly acted up to their principles, and went over to Rome. They were not all weak, and illiterate, and second-rate, and inferior men; several of them were men of commanding talents, whose gifts would have won for them a high position in any profession. Yet what have they gained by the step they have taken? What profit have they found in leaving "grace" for "ceremonies," in exchanging Protestantism for Catholicism? Have they attained a higher standard of holiness? Have they procured for themselves a greater degree of usefulness? Let one of themselves supply an answer. Mr. Ffoulkes, a leading man in the party, within the last few years has openly declared that the preaching of some of his fellow "Perverts" is not so powerful as it was when they were English Churchmen, and that the highest degree of holy living he has ever seen is not within the pale of Rome, but in the quiet parsonages and unpretending family-life of godly English clergymen! Intentionally or not intentionally, wittingly or unwittingly, meaning it or not meaning it, nothing can be more striking than the testimony Mr. Ffoulkes bears to the truth of the Apostle's assertion: "Ceremonial foods do not profit" even those who make much ado about them. The religious system which exalts ceremonial and man-made ritual does no real good to its adherents, compared to the simple old Gospel of the grace of God.

Let us turn now, for a few moments, to the other side of the picture, and see what "grace" has done. Let us hear how profitable the doctrines of the Gospel have proved to those who have clung firmly to them, and have not tried to mend and improve and patch them up by adding, as essentials, the "foods" of man-made ceremonies.

It was "grace, and not foods," that made Martin Luther do the work that he did in the world. The key to all his success was his constant declaration of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law. This was the truth which enabled him to break the chains of Rome, and let light into Europe.

It was "grace, and not ceremonial foods," that made our English martyrs, Latimer and Hooper, exercise so mighty an influence in life, and shine so brightly in death. They saw clearly, and taught plainly, the true priesthood of Christ, and salvation only by grace. They honored God's grace, and God put honor on them.

It was "grace, and not ceremonial foods," that made Romaine and Venn, and their companions, turn the world upside down in England, one hundred years ago. In themselves they were not men of extraordinary learning or intellectual power. But they revived and brought out again the real pure doctrines of grace.

It was "grace, and not ceremonial foods," that made Simeon and Daniel Wilson and Bickersteth such striking instruments of usefulness in the first half of the present century. God's free grace was the great truth on which they relied, and continually brought forward. For so doing God put honor on them. They made much of God's grace, and the God of grace made much of them.

The list of ministerial biographies tells a striking tale. Who are those who have shaken the world, and left their mark on their generation, and aroused consciences, and converted sinners, and edified saints? Not those who have made asceticism, and ceremonials, and sacraments, and services, and ordinances the main thing; but those who have made most of

God's free grace! In a day of strife, and controversy, and doubt, and perplexity, men forget this. Facts are stubborn things. Let us look calmly at them, and be not moved by those who tell us that daily services, processions, incense, bowings, crossings, confessions, absolutions, and the like, are the secret of a prosperous Christianity. Let us look at plain facts. Facts in old history, and facts in modern days, facts in every part of England, support the assertion of Paul. The religion of "ceremonial foods" does "not profit those that are occupied therein." It is the religion of grace that brings inward peace, outward holiness, and general usefulness.

Let me wind up this paper with a few words of practical application. We are living in an age of peculiar religious danger. I am quite sure that the advice I am going to offer deserves serious attention.

(1) In the first place, let us not be surprised at the rise and progress of false doctrine. It is a thing as old as the old Apostles. It began before they died. They predicted that there would be plenty of it before the end of the world. It is wisely ordered of God for the testing of our grace, and to prove who has real faith. If there were no such thing as false doctrine or heresy upon earth, I should begin to think the Bible was not true.

(2) In the next place, let us make up our minds to resist false doctrine, and not to be carried away by fashion and bad example. Let us not flinch, because all around us, high and low, rich and poor, are swept away, like geese in a flood, before a torrent of Catholicism. Let us be firm and stand our ground.

Let us resist false doctrine, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let us not be ashamed of showing our colors and standing out for New Testament truth. Let us not be stopped by the cuckoo cry of "controversy." The thief likes dogs that do not bark, and watchmen that give no alarm. The devil is a thief and a robber. If we hold our peace, and do not resist false doctrine, we please him and displease God.

(3) In the next place, let us try to preserve the old Protestant principles of the Church, and to hand them down uninjured to our children's children. Let us not listen to those faint-hearted Churchmen who would have us forsake the ship, and desert the Church in her time of need.

(4) In the last place, let us make sure work of our own personal salvation. Let us seek to know and feel that we ourselves are "saved." The day of controversy is always a day of spiritual peril. Men are apt to confound orthodoxy with conversion, and to fancy that they must go to heaven if they know how to answer Catholic Priests. Yet mere earnestness without knowledge, and mere head-knowledge of Protestantism, alike save none. Let us never forget this.

Let us not rest till we feel the blood of Christ sprinkled on our consciences, and have the witness of the Spirit within us that we are born again. This is reality. This is true religion. This will last. This will never fail us. It is the possession of grace in the heart, and not the intellectual knowledge of it, that profits and saves the soul.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid106>) J.C. Ryle

RASA ~ Horatius Bonar - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/7/25 15:23

### Religion Without The Holy Ghost

"They took no oil with them."—Matthew 25:3

This parable has many sides and aspects. It is prophetic; it is also practical. It suits all ages, but especially the last days. It suits the world, but specially the church of God; "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear." It is searching and sifting; it is also quickening and comforting. It suits us well in these days of profession and fashionable religion and religiousness.

It divides the church into two classes,—the wise and the foolish in God's sight, not man's; foolish in God's sight, not man's. Thus it is not a parable for the heathen, as if they only were foolish; nor for the profligate, as if they only were foolish; nor for the infidels, as if they only were foolish. But for the church. It comes in to the inner circle of Christian profession, and sifts it, divides it. Let it sift us and test us. Better to be weighed and found wanting now than hereafter. Better to be undeceived now than when it is too late. Let us notice,

I. The points of likeness between the two classes. (1.) They get the same name, virgins; (2.) they wear the same dress; (3.) they are on the same errand; (4.) they have both lamps; (5.) they have both vessels; (6.) they both slumber and sleep. They have thus many features in common. Man could not discern the difference, at least for the time. The peril of mere externalism is that which our Lord points out here. No doubt there must be externalism. Religion must have an outside as well as an inside. The lamp must not only have oil, but it must burn: the external must indicate the internal. And we may say that our Lord intimated the necessity of a thorough consistency and completeness in the outward religious life of a man, so that as a fair external is no excuse for internal unsoundness or incompleteness, so a sound internal is no excuse for an inconsistent life. Our Lord, then, here depicts, (1.) a complete externalism; (2.) a beautiful externalism; (3.) a deceptive externalism; (4.) a prolonged externalism; (5.) an unavailing externalism. Up to a certain point in a man's life, or character, or religion, externalism may avail; but beyond that it gives way; it breaks down; it exhibits its unprofitableness. This externalism may not always be hypocrisy, but it is imitation. It is not the flower in its natural color and growth, but painted, artificial. Let us watch against an artificial life, and an artificial religion. What does it profit now? what will it profit in the day of wrath? The name, the dress, the lamp, the outward show, will all go for nothing in that day of universal discovery and detection.

II. The points of unlikeness. Though in most respects they were all alike, yet there was a difference. It was within; it was imperceptible from without; it could only be discovered when the bridegroom came. Up till then all were completely similar. Only then the want came out in the foolish. There was it seen who were wise, and who were foolish. That day is the day of certain and unerring detection. It is the day of weighing in the balances! It is the separation of the false from the true.

The difference was confined to a single point,—the lack of oil. Some have supposed that the foolish took oil in their lamps, but not in their vessels. It appears, however, that they did neither. The lamps were not required to be lighted till the bridegroom came; and so the oil was not poured in, nor the wick inserted till then. For it was at midnight that the cry was made, and then all the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, that is, supplied them with the wick and oil, and lighted them. Then it was that the foolish discovered (1) their need of oil; (2) their lack of it. Then they went to the wise to beg for a supply; then they (being wisely refused) went to buy, and returned too late. There was "oil in the dwelling of the wise" (Proverbs 21:20), but the foolish were without it.

The oil is the Holy Spirit. To oil He is likened throughout all Scripture, though in some places to fire, and to water, and to wind or air. There is the oil of consecration (Exodus 30:25); of daily food (1 Kings 17:12); of fragrance (Esther 2:12); of joy (Psalm 47, Isaiah 61:3); of healing (Luke 10:34); of light (Zechariah 4:12). The Holy Spirit is all these. But it is as the light-giving oil that He is specially spoken of here; and the lack of Him as such makes the difference between the foolish and the wise. "Having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

Thus a man may be very like a Christian, and yet not be one. He may come very near the kingdom, and yet not enter in. He may have all the outward features of a Christian, and yet be lacking in the main one. He may have the complete dress of the saint, and yet not be one. He may have a good life, a sound creed, a strict profession; he may be one who says and does many things excellent; he may be a subscriber to all the religious societies in the land, a member of all their committees, or a speaker at all their meetings, and supporter of all their plans; he may profess to be looking for Christ's coming, and going forth to meet the bridegroom, yet not necessarily a Christian! He may lack the oil, the Holy Spirit.



A religion without the Holy Ghost profiteth nothing. There is the religion of the intellect, of the sense, of the fancy, of the flesh, of the creed, of the liturgy, of the catechism, of nature, of poetry, of sentiment, of mysticism, of humanity. But what are these without the Spirit? Christianity without Christ, what would that be? Worship without God, what would that be? So religion without the Holy Spirit, what would that be?

Yet is there not much of this among us? Is there not much of dry formalism, lifeless doctrine, sapless routine? I do not call it hypocrisy; I simply call it unreal religion.

And what can unreal religion do for a man? Will it not prove irksome and vain? Will it make him happy and free, or liberal, or zealous, or holy? No. It can do none of these things. It is bondage, and darkness, and weariness.

Yet here is the Holy Spirit in the hands of Christ for you. Go to them that sell, and buy for your selves. Not to men, or churches, or creeds, or ministers, but to Christ. Go to Him. He is exalted to give it; and He will. Apply to Him ere it be too late.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid18>) Horatius Bonar

#### Re: RASA ~ Horatius Bonar, on: 2005/7/27 15:53

Quote:

-----The difference was confined to a single point,Â—the lack of oil.

The oil is the Holy Spirit. To oil He is likened throughout all Scripture, though in some places to fire, and to water, and to wind or air. There is the oil of consecration (Exodus 30:25); of daily food (1 Kings 17:12); of fragrance (Esther 2:12); of joy (Psalm 47, Isaiah 61:3); of healing (Luke 10:34); of light (Zechariah 4:12). The Holy Spirit is all these. But it is as the light-giving oil that He is specially spoken of here; and the lack of Him as such makes **the difference between the foolish and the wise**. "Having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

-----  
Musical, instructive, incisive, tender. This man loved his flock.

#### Re: The oil in this thread., on: 2005/7/29 18:55

About the "oil lamps" and this whole thread.

Lamps wouldn't be needed, unless there was a period of darkness just before the Bridegroom came.

Anyhow, I'm going to download this whole thread, in the event that if I go off line again, or 'something', I'll store it with the rest of the gold I've saved from this site.

It's never over the top, when it's Truth.

'Thanks' for posting these.

Mal 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

#### Re: I See Your Sorrows, on: 2005/7/29 21:47

##### I See Your Sorrows

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. Exodus 3:7

THOU knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow

Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest;

Cares of today, and burdens for tomorrow,

Blessings implored, and sins to be confessed;

I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,

And lay them at Thy feet - Thou knowest, Lord.

JANE BORTHWICK

THAT sorrow which can be seen is the lightest form really, however apparently heavy; then there is that which is not seen, secret sorrows which yet can be put into words, and can be told to near friends as well as be poured out to God; but there are sorrows beyond these, such as are never told, and cannot be put into words, and may only be wordlessly laid before God: these are the deepest. Now comes the supply for each: "I have seen" that which is patent and external; "I have heard their cry," which is the expression of this, and of as much of the external as is expressible; but this would not go deep enough, so God adds, "I know their sorrows," down to very depths of all, those which no eye sees or ear ever hears.

F. R. HAVERGAL

**Re: Thank The Lord., on: 2005/7/29 22:59**

That was beautiful Dorcas.

To coin your term from your last post, "tender".

And may I add "sensitive" to the Holy Spirit.

I'm sure it will minister to many/any, but it gripped me where it hurts.

The Healing Balm of Gilead.

Thank you kind brother.

Annie

**Re: HAVERGAL - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/7/29 23:24**

My, I tried to clip out part of that HAVERGAL  
and keep wanting to bring in the 'but'...

Quote:

----- but there are sorrows beyond these, such as are never told, and cannot be put into words, and may only be wordlessly laid before  
God: these are the deepest.  
-----

So true and the most ... *cannot be put into words*

Quote:

-----Now comes the supply  
-----

Grand words here.

Re: I know your sorrows, on: 2005/7/30 11:19

Quote:  
-----but this would not go deep enough, so God adds, "I know their sorrows," down to very depths of all, those which no eye sees or ear ever heard.  
-----

'Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore,  
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.'

*Fanny Crosby*

If I don't believe He bore *all* my sorrows, I can *never* be comforted in those unseeable places. Being open to such knowings by Him requires faith that being known by Him will bring comfort and healing. Only as I am comforted, will I know for sure - **He knew!** :-D Here is another strand to 'joy in believing'.

Re: Holy Ghost Tears by GD Watson, on: 2005/7/30 17:39

Tears have a language just as definite and emphatic as smiles or gestures. Words do not constitute the only language we speak, for everywhere there are many languages spoken by every human being. There is a language in our gait, our tones of voice, our eyes, smiles, gestures, and our physical movements, in our laughter, facial expression, and in our tears.

The Bible is full of tears. See how the patriarchs "lifted up their voices and wept". Read in the prophets how the tears poured down their cheeks night and day. Go through the New Testament and see Jesus weeping with His friends at the grave of Lazarus. Read Paul's Epistles where the burning tears fell on the page as he wrote. What a vast ocean of heart life and pathos and feeling pervades the whole Bible. It is not a stoical, human, philosophical book; it throbs with deep feeling from beginning to end. It is a wonderful blessing to any human soul to have the Holy Ghost plow up the deep, interior fountains, and melt all the emotions, and cause the heart to pour itself out in tears.

There are different types of Holy Ghost tears. There are the tears which flow from conviction of sin, especially when we see the sin in the light of God and look at it in contrast with the Divine compassion and longsuffering toward us. All truth, to be forcible, must be seen with its two sides as a whole and not as a half truth. And so the sight of our sins, would not of itself break up the depths of the heart into weeping. But when this vision of sin is seen in connection with God's longsuffering and compassion towards us, we get a little glimpse into the tenderness and merciful feeling of God for sinners. Then sin seems heart breaking, and so the conscience is touched to the quick, which produces a flow of tears.

It was this kind of weeping that Mary Magdalene poured out over the feet of her precious Lord. It was this kind of tears that flowed thick and fast from the eyes of Peter when he heard the cock crow. No sinner can be made to weep by a mere cold, formal sight of his sins. Mt. Sinai made the Jews tremble, but did not make them weep, and so the denunciation of sin or the portrayal of it can never of itself produce repentant tears. It is only when the sins are seen under the soft, melting light of infinite pity and love that the heart is broken and the tears flow. Law may reveal sin, but nothing in the universe except love will make a man hate his sins. Water may be locked up in ice, but you cannot drink it till it is melted, and it takes the warmth of the tenderest love to bring forth the waters of repentance.

There are tears we shed out of an intense desire of seeing God, of beholding Jesus. These are tears of a still higher order. These are tears such as David shed when he longed for the courts of the living God during his banishment and when he said his soul thirsted for God as the panting hart after the water brooks. These are the tears Mary shed when she sat at the empty tomb of Jesus with an unspeakable longing to find her dear Lord. There are no tears that give us such a deep and beautiful insight into the preciousness of Christ's person and character as these tears of holy longing. When we get an opportunity for long seasons of secret prayer and pour out our hearts to our Heavenly Father, and then leave ourselves open for the Spirit to work in us as He pleases, He begins to draw us out in pure heart longings after God. It is glorious beyond description to have Him give us glimpses of Himself that seem to entice our souls almost out of the body, and draw us away with such inward pantings, that the heart seems to leap and bound upward into the Heavenly world.

We seem in spirit to be running with all our might to get closer to His blessed face, and at every bound it seems our hearts will break with desire after the living God, till the great fountain of tears is broken up and they flow like hot salt streams

down our cheeks. Then the soul cries out, "O my Lord! My Love! Thou infinitely blessed, tender, precious God; when shall I see thee in thy glory, and when shall I drink myself full of thine eternal blessedness!" These tears give to our inner eyes telescopic visions into the beauties of God as they are clustered and set forth in the meek and lowly JESUS. These tears are supernatural, and float us, like Noah's flood, above the highest mountain tops of earth into the deep blue dome of the peace and joy of God.

Another kind of spiritual tears are those we shed out of pure love for our fellows, when we weep over the sins of mankind, the calamities of our neighbors, and out of a heart sorrow, for the salvation of souls. Such are the tears St. Paul shed over the wayward Galatians, and over those persons who had made shipwreck of their faith. It was tears like this that Samuel shed, when the Lord told him that Saul had turned away from God, and was rejected from being king, and the great loving prophet wept all night long. It was such holy, loving tears as these that fell from the eyes of Jesus as He sat on Mt. Olivet, and looked over His beautiful but ill-fated Jerusalem, and said, while the tears trickled down His cheeks, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not."

These were the kind of tears the weeping prophet, Jeremiah, poured out all his life over the sins and desolations of his people. These are the tears that soul winners who are filled with holy love shed over the souls that they are seeking to save. These are the Holy Ghost tears which the humble and holy ones pour out in the silent night watches before God over the awful backslidings in the churches, over worldly ministers, and over cold, lifeless congregations.

Perhaps these tears take us down deeper in the heart of Jesus because they bring us into the plan of His sacrifice for others and knit us in sympathy with His soul over the lost. There are many professed Christians who seldom weep; in fact, many of them speak slightly of tears, but such persons are leagues away from the true Bible life. May God pity the dry eyed Christians, for if the eye is dry, the heart behind the eyes is dry also. We must never have self complacency in our tears, or look upon them as good in themselves; they are simply the effect which proves the working of a deep spiritual cause, back in the soul. But while we are not to be attached to our tears, we are to thank God that He gives them to us, and above all things, we are to seek that inward tenderness of nature, that lowly contrition of heart, that interior union with the Christ life out of which Holy Ghost tears may flow.

#### **Re: The Offence Of The Natural, on: 2005/8/6 7:49**

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”  
Galatians 5:2

The natural life is not sinful; we must be apostatized from sin, have nothing to do with sin in any shape or form. Sin belongs to hell and the devil; I, as a child of God, belong to heaven and God. It is not a question of giving up sin, but of giving up my right to myself, my natural independence and self-assertiveness, and this is where the battle has to be fought. It is the things that are right and noble and good from the natural stand point that keep us back from God's best. To discern that natural virtues antagonize surrender to God, is to bring our soul into the centre of its greatest battle. Very few of us debate with the sordid and evil and wrong, but we do debate with the good. It is the good that hates the best, and the higher up you get in the scale of the natural virtues, the more intense is the opposition to Jesus Christ. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" - it is going to cost the natural in you everything, not something. Jesus said - "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself," i.e., his right to himself, and a man has to realize Who Jesus Christ is before he will do it. Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.

The natural life is not spiritual, and it can only be made spiritual by sacrifice. If we do not resolutely sacrifice the natural, the supernatural can never become natural in us. There is no royal road there; each of us has it entirely in his own hands. It is not a question of praying, but of performing.

*Oswald Chambers*

I guess I've read this before, but, this time I understand it! Next time, I hope to be saying I've been there, done that - at last!

**Re: Holy Ghost Tears by GD Watson, on: 2005/8/6 14:17**

"Holy Ghost Tears by GD Watson  
by dorcas on 2005/7/30 17:39:30"

I wanted to Quote your post, but I'd wind up Re-posting it :-).

Thank you Dorcas. You sure do find them.

God Bless you as this blessed me and I'm glad I found it today.

This site is so HUGE that I don't or can't possibly find Every post, though I've tried, but sometimes, God has mercy and will for some reason, direct me to someone's post, as a "need for that specific hour" in my life.

Thanks, you again,  
Hope yer well.

Annie

**Re: GA's response to Holy Tears, on: 2005/8/6 14:36**

I had read a sermon by Spurgeon, which he ended up by saying he would weep for those who had not turned to the Lord, in pleading with them to come. It was so natural how he phrased it, and then, this came up, and I was very touched to begin to understand something more about crying in the Spirit, as I do, but, it's random. It's not a particular issue-burden, if I could call weeping for the lost, that. It's more that in praying in the Spirit, tears often come, whatever is the subject of the prayer.

**Re: Tears., on: 2005/8/6 23:29**

No sweeter tears are kept in that "jar in Heaven" than those wept for others.

Bless ya Dorcas.

**RASA ~ Oswald Chambers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/8/7 10:18**

**Disposition And Deeds**

*“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*  
Matthew 5:20

The characteristic of a disciple is not that he does good things, but that he is good in motive because he has been made good by the super-natural grace of God. The only thing that exceeds right-doing is right-being. Jesus Christ came to put into any man who would let Him a new heredity which would exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says - If you are My disciple you must be right not only in your living, but in your motives, in your dreams, in the recesses of your mind. You must be so pure in your motives that God Almighty can see nothing to censure. Who can stand in the Eternal Light of God and have nothing for God to censure? Only the Son of God, and Jesus Christ claims that by His Redemption He can put into any man His own disposition, and make him as unsullied and as simple as a child. The purity which God demands is impossible unless I can be remade within, and that is what Jesus has undertaken to do by His Redemption.

No man can make himself pure by obeying laws. Jesus Christ does not give us rules and regulations; His teachings are truths that can only be interpreted by the disposition He puts in. The great marvel of Jesus Christ's salvation is that He alters heredity. He does not alter human nature; He alters its mainspring

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid484>) Oswald Chambers

**Apostasy by CH Spurgeon, on: 2005/8/8 8:51**

Not sure if the numbers at paragraph ends refer to a concordance or commentary, so leaving them.

APOSTASY

The first step astray is a want of adequate faith in the divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures. DG13

In looking carefully over the history of the times, and the movement of the times, of which we have written briefly, this fact is apparent: that where ministers and Christian churches have held fast to the truth that the Holy Scriptures have been given by God as an authoritative and infallible rule of faith and practice, they have never wandered very seriously out of the right way. But when, on the other hand, reason has been exalted above revelation, and made the exponent of revelation, all kinds of errors and mischiefs have been the result. DG13

Saul was once among the prophets, but he was more at home among the persecutors. 2LS20

This would be the first step in apostasy; men first forget the true, and then adore the false. TD44:20

If I must be lost, let it be anyhow rather than as an apostate. If there be any distinction among the damned, those have it who are wandering stars, trees plucked up by the roots, twice dead, for whom Jude tells us, is "reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Reserved! as if nobody else were qualified to occupy that place but themselves. They are to inhabit the darkest, hottest place, because they forsook the Lord. 547.11

You know how many passages there are in which it is positively asserted that if a child of God did deliberately and totally apostatize, his restoration would be utterly impossible—not difficult, but impossible. This is one of the greatest proofs of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, since there is no man in a condition in which it is impossible to save him, and yet any man would be in such a state if he apostatized. Therefore true believers shall not apostatize, but shall stand fast, and shall be kept even to the end. Yet, could they totally apostatize, they could never be restored again: the greatest remedy having already failed, there would remain no other. 1341.129

The raw material for a devil is an angel. The raw material for the son of perdition was an apostle; and the raw material for the most horrible of apostates is one who is almost a saint. 1929.623

That which begins with shamefacedness, equivocation, hesitation, and compromise will ripen into apostasy. 2209.328

Neither would it ensure your salvation to be able to foretell the future, for Balaam was a great prophet, but he was a great sinner; he was an arch-rebel although he was an arch-divine. 2330.495

He is not the God of apostates, for he hath said, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." 2633.362

You must pick from among the apostles to find an apostate. 2914.610

Beginners in the way of grace, it is a great and solemn truth that every child of God will hold on until the end, but it is an equally solemn truth that many who profess to be the Lord's are self-deceivers, and will turn out apostates after all. 3520.329

**Re: Apostasy by CH Spurgeon, on: 2005/8/17 19:31**

A Brief and Untechnical Statement of the Reformed Faith

I believe that my one aim in life and death should be to glorify God and enjoy him forever; and that God teaches me how to glorify him in his holy Word, that is, the Bible, which he had given by the infallible inspiration of this Holy Spirit in order that I may certainly know what I am to believe concerning him and what duty he requires of me.

I believe that God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and incomparable in all that he is; one God but three persons, the Father, the



e Son, and the Holy Ghost, my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier; in whose power and wisdom, righteousness, goodness and truth I may safely put my trust.

I believe that the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, are the work of God hands; and that all that he has made he directs and governs in all their actions; so that they fulfill the end for which they were created, and I who trust in him shall not be put to shame but may rest securely in the protection of his almighty love.

I believe that God created man after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and entered into a covenant of life with him upon the sole condition of the obedience that was his due; so that it was by willfully sinning against God that man fell into the sin and misery in which I have been born.

I believe, that, being fallen in Adam, my first father, I am by nature a child of wrath, under the condemnation of God and corrupted in body and soul, prone to evil and liable to eternal death; from which dreadful state I cannot be delivered save through the unmerited grace of God my Savior.

I believe that God has not left the world to perish in its sin, but out of the great love wherewith he has loved it, has from all eternity graciously chosen unto himself a multitude which no man can number, to deliver them out of their sin and misery, and of them to build up again in the world his kingdom of righteousness; in which kingdom I may be assured I have my part, if I hold fast to Christ the Lord.

I believe that God has redeemed his people unto himself through Jesus Christ our Lord; who, though he was and ever continues to be the eternal Son of God, yet was born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that are under the law: I believe that he bore the penalty due to my sins in his own body on the tree, and fulfilled in his own person the obedience I owe to the righteousness of God, and now presents me to his Father as his purchased possession, to the praise of the glory of his grace forever; wherefore renouncing all merit of my own, I put all my trust only in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ my redeemer.

I believe that Jesus Christ my redeemer, who died for my offences was raised again for my justification, and ascended into the heavens, where he sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty, continually making intercession for his people, and governing the whole world as head over all things for his Church; so that I need fear no evil and may surely know that nothing can snatch me out of his hands and nothing can separate me from his love.

I believe that the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ is effectually applied to all his people by the Holy Spirit, who works faith in me and thereby unites me to Christ, renews me in the whole man after the image of God, and enables me more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness; until, this gracious work having been completed in me, I shall be received into glory; in which great hope abiding, I must ever strive to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

I believe that God requires of me, under the gospel, first of all, that, out of a true sense of my sin and misery and apprehension of his mercy in Christ, I should turn with grief and hatred away from sin and receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation; that, so being united to him, I may receive pardon for my sins and be accepted as righteous in God's sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to me and received by faith alone; and thus and thus only do I believe I may be received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

I believe that, having been pardoned and accepted for Christ's sake, it is further required of me that I walk in the Spirit whom he has purchased for me, and by whom love is shed abroad in my heart; fulfilling the obedience I owe to Christ my King; faithfully performing all the duties laid upon me by the holy law of God my heavenly Father; and ever reflecting in my life and conduct, the perfect example that has been set me by Christ Jesus my Leader, who has died for me and granted to me his Holy Spirit just that I may do the good works which God has afore prepared that I should walk in them.

I believe that God has established his Church in the world and endowed it with the ministry of the Word and the holy ordinances of Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Prayer; in order that through these as means, the riches of his grace in the gospel may be made known to the world, and, by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them, the benefits of redemption may be communicated to his people; wherefore also it is required of me that I attend on these means of grace with diligence, preparation, and prayer, so that through them I may be instructed and strengthened in faith, and in holiness of life and in love; and that I use my best endeavors to carry this gospel and convey these means of grace to the whole world.

I believe that as Jesus Christ has once come in grace, so also is he to come a second time in glory, to judge the world in

righteousness and assign to each his eternal award; and I believe that if I die in Christ, my soul shall be at death made perfect in holiness and go home to the Lord; and when he shall return to his majesty I shall be raised in glory and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity: encouraged by which blessed hope it is required of me willingly to take my part in suffering hardship here as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, being assured that if I die with him I shall also live with him, if I endure, I shall also reign with him. And to Him, my Redeemer, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons, one God, be glory forever, world without end, Amen, and Amen.

**Re: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, on: 2005/8/28 1:09**

Sorry, missed the author's name.

Also, I want to ask, do we get keep our own personality?

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live

The Christ life is in harmony with our nature. The other day I was asked by a thoughtful, intelligent woman—one not a Christian, but who had the deepest hunger for that which is right—"How can Christ enter us and we not lose our individuality? This experience will destroy our personality; it violates our responsibility as individuals." My response was, "Your personality is incomplete without Christ. Christ was made for you, and you were made for Christ, and until you meet Him you are not complete. He needs you as you need Him. "Suppose," I continued, "that gas jet should say, 'If I take this fire in, the gas coursing through me will lose its individuality.' Oh, no; it is only when the fire comes in that the gas fulfills its purpose for being. "Suppose the snowflake should say, 'What shall I do? If I drop on the ground I shall lose my individuality.' But it falls and is absorbed by the soil, and with the coming spring the snowflakes are seen in the primroses and daisies." Let us lose ourselves and rise to a new life in Christ.

**Re: God Can Make You Strong, on: 2005/10/14 11:28**

God Can Make You Strong

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded. (2 Chronicles 15:7)

God had done great things for King Asa and Judah, but yet they were a feeble folk. Their feet were very tottering in the ways of the Lord, and their hearts very hesitating, so that they had to be warned that the Lord would be with them while they were with Him, but that if they forsook Him He would leave them. They were also reminded of the sister kingdom, how ill it fared in its rebellion and how the Lord was gracious to it when repentance was shown. The Lord's design was to confirm them in His way and make them strong in righteousness. So ought it to be with us. God deserves to be served with all the energy of which we are capable.

If the service of God is worth anything, it is worth everything. We shall find our best reward in the Lord's work if we do it with determined diligence. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord, and we know it. Halfhearted work will bring no reward; but when we throw our whole soul into the cause, we shall see prosperity. This text was sent to the author of these notes in a day of terrible storm, and it suggested to him to put on all steam, with the assurance of reaching port in safety with a glorious freight.

*C H Spurgeon*

**Re: Random Article strikes again, on: 2005/10/14 11:38**

Quote:  
-----This text was sent to the author of these notes in a day of terrible storm, and it suggested to him to put on all steam, with the assurance of reaching port in safety with a glorious freight.  
-----

This strikes a chord with me - not the terrible storm as much as the need to put on all steam. Having sailed long distances in real ships a few times, there is a glorious difference between putting out from port and setting course for ocean proper.

The thought of arriving with a glorious cargo is encouragement too, as God Himself ordains the journey and undertakes it

o help it through - praise His Name! What a great God!

**RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/11/21 9:19**

(A note for newer readers, Rasa is not Jamaican but an acronym for "Random Article Strikes Again". On the main page to the upper right is where these gold nuggets break the surface every time you change pages or click on a link and come back. They constantly change, hence the "Random". But you can always go searching through (<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/>) Text Sermons under the main menu as well as that big button there for more.)

*"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Proverbs 24.21).*

I came across an arresting statement in the Book of Job: "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (Job 16.19), of which the Gaelic version reads as follows: "My witness is in the heavens, and He who bears testimony of me is on high."

Enoch had this testimony "that he pleased God" (Heb. 11.5), and the prayer of the writer to the Hebrews is in the following words: "The God of peace ... make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight" (Heb. 13.20, 21). This passage surely refers to the way we live and act, as those who profess to be followers of Christ.

There are two characters in Scripture, whose CONDUCT emphasizes this quality of life. In the Old Testament, the testimony of the woman of Shunem concerning Elisha is of interest in this connection: "I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" (2 Kings 4.9). There was a consistency and STEADFASTNESS about his mode of living that marked him out as a holy man whose walk was well-pleasing to God. In the New Testament, it is said of Barnabas: "He was a good man," again indicating that there was something about his life that spoke of goodness or godliness. How many of us would rather have that said of us than that we were good preachers or good organizers! I believe the greatest contribution we can make to the cause of Christ is in the impact of our unconscious influence. Today we are inclined to think a great deal of cleverness, and even of smartness, but the day is coming when there will be a startling reversal. Goodness will be first and greatness last. Here I would recall the testimony of one Christian worker concerning another: "She is all she professes to be and much more." The writer of the following verses puts this very aptly:

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,  
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way;  
The eye's a better pupil, more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;

The best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds, For to see good put in action is what everybody needs; I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done, I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run; The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true, But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do; I may not understand the high advice that you may give, But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live."

The late Dr. Stuart Holden, speaking of the early disciples, said: "Here were men who were with Him long enough to capture His spirit, and so were made competent to go forth to reproduce Him in the world." The success or failure of our work as a church or mission depends, in the last resort, largely, not in the number of preachers we put into the field, nor on the size of our congregations, but rather on the character of Christianity we and our work produce.

So we see that CONDUCT is the way we act or live. You have heard it said: "I do not care what people think of me." By way of comment, someone has said: "That may be all right as a statement of consecration, but it is a poor rule of conduct!" We ought to care what people think of us. Scripture clearly declares that we are called upon to be 'lights', so that men seeing our good works may glorify God. It is a solemn thought that God's character before the world is committed to His people so that in a true sense, His reputation is in our hands. This can be illustrated by the story of the traveler who, some years ago, called at an hotel. The appointments were the finest and the service the best that he had ever known. The proprietor was considered the most successful man in that business in that part of the country. One day the traveler found the secret. In the staff quarters, unseen by the public, but where it was visible to his employees, hung a card with the words: "My reputation is in your hands."

My appeal is for a more practical expression of our faith, the practical aspect springing from a pattern of life based on Ne

W Testament standards, as represented by the Sermon on the Mount. The average man whom we are anxious to win, will not be impressed by anything less. Whitefield was once asked: "Is such and such a man a Christian?" "I do not know," was the reply, "I never lived with him," suggesting that he was basing his judgment on CONDUCT rather than hearsay.

This theme often engages the powerful pen of the apostle, mention of which has already been made in the preceding chapter, where he clearly states that "none of us liveth to himself" (Romans 14.7), suggesting that our CONDUCT is touching others at a thousand points. Was it the CONDUCT of Nehemiah that impressed King Artaxerxes, and led him to act as he did? Nehemiah was the custodian of God's interests in the palace, and his CONDUCT must reflect that. We, too, are the custodians of God's interests in the world. We would do well to ask ourselves: "Do men see Jesus in us?"

Henry Ward Beecher, when asked what was the secret of so much blessing in his ministry, replied: "I have good reflectors in the pew!" Nehemiah was a 'good reflector' in the King's household. Notice that as the King's cup-bearer, he realized that his position was an opportunity of furthering the cause of God. His conduct did but reflect his burden and his sense of responsibility. That, I believe, led the King to ask: "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?" (Neh. 2.2), to which Nehemiah replied: "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" (Neh. 2.3).

One cannot read this interesting record without being profoundly impressed by the prayer life of God's servant. Often we have the words: "So I prayed to the God of heaven." His mode of living, his CONDUCT, indicated that his was a disciplined life. He found time to pray because he lived with a sense of responsibility and urgency. He was a trusted servant, but he found time to pray in the day-time and in the night (Neh. 1.6).

Cont...

**Re: RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/11/21 9:23**

I know of nothing that demands greater discipline than prayer, i.e. if we are to remain STEADFAST, but I know of no place where the "lure of the lesser loyalty" is more felt. We must ever remember that there is a sufficient latent power in the most trifling neglect of anything God shows us, to put an eternity of difference between us and His eternal purpose for our lives. Here is an entry in Robert Murray McCheyne's diary, dated February 23rd, 1834: "Sabbath. Rose early to seek God and found 'Him whom my soul loveth'. Who would not rise early to meet such company!"

Is it not remarkable, if not disturbing that we, as Christian workers, should often lose interest in the company that McCheyne loved to keep? It was also he who said: "No amount of activity in the King's service will make up for the neglect of the King Himself. Here, I would stress the need to guard carefully the morning watch. We should ever aim at coming into contact with God in the morning, so that hearing His voice we may be made conscious of His presence, and know the inspiration that comes from such a meeting.

I am fully persuaded that every man who has to speak for God to his fellows must first learn in himself to be silent before God. "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him," is the heart-cry of David (Psalm 62.5). He had come to learn that the way of duty, comfort, strength and stability was in fellowship with God. The prophet Isaiah also has an assuring word in this connection: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40.31). Away from the din of men to be lost in the full realization of God and the wonder of His saving grace, is surely what is suggested in this passage. This, surely, is the essential qualification for responsible service; for all the powers of heaven are ready to co-operate with the man who thus waits. How many there are whose lives are weak and whose service is poor and ineffective, just because they have not zealously guarded the time and place of prayer! It is well, therefore, that we should pause and ask ourselves the question: "What place has prayer in my life?"

The history of many a moral and spiritual tragedy is the history of the man who, because of his failure to maintain close fellowship with God, has lost out, and has become that which Paul dreaded to become -- a castaway! The tragedy could have been avoided, if only through waiting upon God there had been infused into his Christian character the 'rock' quality of which David writes: "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God" (Psalm 62.7). It is instructive to learn how practical such a life is in which such characteristics express themselves in a walk that is pleasing to God. There is a sincerity that is transparent, a goodness that is impressive, a walk that is upright and works that are righteous. Such a man lives in harmony with the truth he professes to believe.

When I want to discover the secret of a life that has left its mark on its day and generation, I find myself asking what lay behind that life; what was the motivating power that produced such character? The apostle answers that question:

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1.8). Peter suggests that the root and fruit of Christian character springs from a belief in the invisible God becoming the supreme reality, and it is this indescribable awareness that controls CONDUCT, and exerts an influence that is far-reaching.

In his Corinthian Epistle, Paul makes a bold statement: "Be ye followers of me" (I Cor. 4.16). Matthew Henry, commenting on this passage, says: "It is plain that Paul not only preached such doctrine as they ought to believe, but lived such a life as they ought to imitate." It was Dr. Chalmers who said: "There is more moral persuasion in a good man's life than in the highest efforts of an orator's genius." This leads me to a consideration of the power of influence.

When Paul exhorted the Corinthians, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable . . ." (I Cor. 15.58), he surely had in mind that quality of life that often creates in others a desire to emulate the CONDUCT of the person whose actions are governed by high principles. Is it not true that a disposition to imitate is observable in the human race? The boy, seeing his father chopping wood, must have an axe and a saw. This desire is in the very heart of man, for God has put it there, and it is this desire which, when actuated by the Holy Spirit, leads on to higher heights and deeper depths, creating a hunger, such as finds expression in the prayer of the apostle: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3.12), or in the words of the hymn writer:

"More about Jesus let me learn,  
More of His holy will discern;  
Spirit of God, my teacher be,  
Showing the things of Christ to me."

I read somewhere that in a certain cemetery a small white stone marked the grave of a young child. On the stone these words were chiseled: "A little child of whom her playmates said, 'It was easier to be good when she was with us'." Such was the conduct of a little girl.

During the revival in Lewis I was led to speak to a company of young converts from the text: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4.9), stressing the point that men judge us, not by what we say, but by what we are and do. At the close of the meeting an elderly man who had recently found the Saviour, came to me and said very brokenly: "I am a living evidence of the tragedy of a wasted influence. What would I not give to recall the wasted years!" If to be forewarned is to be forearmed, let us heed the warning: "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6.8).

Our Lord used His teaching as a guide to our CONDUCT, and we would do well to remember that there is no discipleship without the attempt at imitation. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11.1) is a Scriptural injunction. What is the worth of a discipleship which, day by day, contradicts Christ's life? It was John Stuart Mill who said, as quoted by Alexander MacLaren: "There was no better rule for life than to do as Christ would have done." Christ's own words to His disciples are clear and emphatic: "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am... For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13.13-15).

So let us bow to His kingly rule, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid13>) Duncan Campbell

**Re: RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/11/21 23:18**

Quote:

-----"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,  
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way;  
The eye's a better pupil, more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;

The best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds, For to see good put in action is what everybody needs; I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done, I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run; The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true, But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do; I may not understand the high advice that you may give, But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live."

**Ecstatic Feelings ~ Harmon A. Baldwin - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/12/6 15:56**

### **Ecstatic Feelings**

Another ambiguous statement is that the sun is always shining (meaning ecstatic blessings) in the holy man's sky. We sing,

"Here the sun is always shining  
Here the sun is always bright;  
'Tis no place for gloomy Christians to abide  
For my soul is filled with music,  
And my heart with great delight,  
And I'm living on the hallelujah side."

There is no doubt that the Sun of Righteousness is always shining, and that the holy man always resides under His healing rays and is a constant partaker of His beneficent influences, but it is also a fact that the holy man must pass through clouds. These clouds need not, and if the man keeps holy they will not succeed in intercepting the power of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, yet they may temporarily intercept one's consciousness of these rays, and then the holy man sings,

"I oft pass through tunnels that seem dark as night,"

and it is possible that for the time being he may lose sight of even the inner light. Job had such an experience, but he said, "When Thou hast tried me, I will come forth as gold."

While Wesley strongly accuses Madam Guyon for teaching that God at times withdraws the consciousness of His presence and favor even from the soul that is cleansed, and says some good things about God not playing bo-peep with His children, yet, on the other hand, he admits the possibility of strong temptations clouding, temporarily, the work of God.

But does not sanctification shine by its own light? And does not the new birth, too? Sometimes it does; and so does sanctification; at others it does not. In the hour of temptation Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness., without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist.

We once heard a holiness preacher make the statement at the head of this chapter in substance, and then consume fifteen or twenty minutes in endeavoring to reconcile some of the Bible facts about trials, afflictions, heaviness, etc., with his unbiblical premise. We concluded that it was a hard job to split hairs close enough to bolster up a statement which contradicts both the Bible and every-day experience. While a man may always rejoice in the facts of redemption and personal participation in its merits, yet it is a question whether a person can be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and at the same time feel the ecstasy of joy that he does when the heaviness is removed. We once heard of a good brother who was subject to seasons of great temptation and pressure. After enduring for some time he would begin to shout. When asked why he shouted, he replied, "I am shouting to think how good I will feel when I get out of this." Some of you folks who are so often overtaken by temptation might try that for a while.

But some testify that it is an actual fact that "a cloud does arise to darken their skies." This is good, and we rejoice with such persons with exceeding joy; but when these persons insist in making their experiences a standard by which to measure all others, and harshly accuse the ones who suffer either mental or spiritual depression while under a stress of temptation or physical disability, we wish to register our humble objection. We have heard people loudly boast of their unclouded joys, and undisturbed serenity, reproaching those who did not reach the same standard; and then we have seen these same persons in the furnace, and have decided -- well, we are all human after all, even though we may be sanctified. I



It is not the amount of ecstasy which I enjoy that measures my grace, but the amount of victory I have in the midst of trials.

On the same line, some say that the sanctified, and some that even the justified, live a triumphant life. The Bible says that God "always causes us to triumph in Christ" (1 Cor. 2:14). If the reader will turn to this passage and read the context, he will find that the triumph of which the apostle speaks is along two lines, personal soul victory and success in preaching the gospel; there is no suggestion of the continual mountain-top ecstasies which some would have us believe are inseparable from a pure heart.

Doubtless, if one lives right, these soul thrills will come, and, perhaps, the nearer to God he lives the oftener they will come and the more glorious they will be; but the hundreds, yea, thousands that have fallen by the way because they did not continually feel the ecstatic triumphs that they were made to believe they should have, are witness to the error of such teaching and the need of a warning voice.

Do you have soul victory? Do you do God's bidding? If so you "triumph in Christ," no matter how heavy the burdens, or how gloomy your earthly prospects. George Nitsch says, We can not have heaven twice; and that is how a chain of anxiety and trouble is woven into our happiness; and that is the reason Christ's kisses are so scarce, and His visits so rare. But when we come together above the sun and the moon, then we will experience the full riches of His love, which He will pour out upon us to all eternity.

This is soul triumph -- to live a holy life.

Again, we are told that there are no movements in the clean soul in response to temptation. A second thought would surely show the error of such a statement for, if the temptation is detected and repelled there must of necessity be a movement of opposition. The response of righteous indignation is aroused at hearing the name of that God whom the soul adores blasphemed, or at the sight of vice and guilt outraging virtue and innocence.

If, in place of saying there is no response to temptation, we should say there is no agreement with temptation, we are correct, provided we except those solicitations which are directed at the natural appetites and desires which remain in the nature of even the sanctified. The devil tried this latter method with Jesus when he suggested that Jesus turn stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. There was a desire for food, and doubtless a desire to which the suggestion could appeal, but since at that special time, the working of the miracle to satisfy the desire for food would have been obedience to the devil, Jesus rejected it immediately. Thus when our natural appetites are aroused and solicited grace detects the enemy's ruse and overcomes. No sin is committed and the heart remains pure.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid642>) Harmon A. Baldwin

#### Re: The Real Power of the Pastor Is in His Earnest Godliness, on: 2006/5/31 18:16

The Real Power of the Pastor Is in His Earnest Godliness

This is his power with God; it is also his power with men. Though other branches of preparation are absolutely necessary, yet this it is which above every thing else will make him an able workman. His calling is such that his heart is needed in it at every point. It is the heart alone, and the heart glowing with love to God, that can give him strength and energy and perseverance and success. With it he will be irresistible, without it his ministerial life will be a failure. Where there is such an unction of the Holy Spirit it will, as a matter of course, impart a high and holy character; and a character without a spot and beyond suspicion must ever be the right arm of a minister's efficiency. It is in fact indispensable to his real efficiency. In this the calling of the pastor is different from most other callings among men. **Worldly wisdom or professional skill or artistic proficiency may give a high degree of success in these callings without any aid whatever from moral or religious character. But not so with the minister. Christian integrity is that which must penetrate and give tone to all that he does.** What skill is to the artist, what logical acumen is to the lawyer, what far-seeing wisdom is to the statesman, **that is consistent integrity to him. It is the tower of his strength among men. It is his most attractive ornament. Rob him of that, and he becomes the most despised of mankind; give it to him in its richness, and no man is more honored and beloved. And the heart is the true source of such exalted character. Wh**

**ere there is devoted godliness in the heart it will be seen in the life. It cannot be hid.** It is not ostentatious, but it must necessarily work itself out into the light of day. Moreover, it cannot be counterfeited. If the genuine work is not within, no efforts to imitate it will be successful. But **where it really is, life, lips, acts will all reveal it, even when it is not so intended. The heart which is elevated by communion with Christ will show itself on the countenance and in the daily communion with men.**

Hence, **whatever character we would bear with our fellow men, we must attain to in the depths of our own hearts . Whatever standing we would maintain before the world, we must first reach in our secret intercourse with God.** Then devoted piety will almost inevitably disarm opposition, and even envy itself. There is in it such a charm of humility that enmity cannot stand in its presence. It has a gentleness of love that could not be hated. As a matter of fact, it may be generally seen that the men who live nearest to God are the ones who have the least annoyance from opposition. The good man will have but few adversaries, excepting among such as were adversaries to Him who was goodness incarnate . Because piety disarms opposition it must give power as well as peace to him who is most deeply imbued with its spirit. Moreover, **to have the heart true to God and true to men through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit is the only way to obtain that abiding confidence from men which is so essential to the gospel minister. That confidence cannot be retained unless it has its source in a deep fountain of truth within.** But that will secure it. Who can doubt the reliability of him who evidently lives under the power of heavenly motives? And such confidence is an armory of power for the minister. Much as it is needed in most earthly callings, in none of them is it so important as in his. When men have reason to rely upon him fully, his motives will be rightly construed, even when they cannot all be seen, and all his efforts in the gospel cause will have double weight. He will then have an influence among his fellow men that will itself be a very great power.

There are men whose reputation for high integrity makes them giants- moral giants- for good in the world. For this reason, even if for none better, should **that highest of integrity, the integrity of true godliness, be assiduously sought after. It will give such weight to the minister's words that none of them will be lost.** Coming, as they manifestly do, from an honest and earnest heart, they will be received, and weighed, and remembered. It will be seen that he holds communion with God, and so men will be induced to listen to him, as otherwise they would not. The respect which his manifest godliness inspires will compel them to honor his message. And then his preaching will inevitably be clothed with double power. That true sanctity which becomes the gospel minister will keep him near to God, the source of all real strength and success. He cannot retain any measure of spirituality unless he walks with God. But from that holy presence he will go out among his fellow men clothed in a might that no human training or talents could give him. Then may his soul beam with a glory like that which irradiated the face of Moses as he came down from Sinai. He would carry with him an indescribable atmosphere of sacredness that would tell effectively on all his ministry.

With almost the authority of the Master could he speak. From the source from which he received communications of grace would he also receive communications of power, and as he ministered in the name of the Lord, would the strength of that name go with him, and bring forth results that would be the crown of his rejoicing. An eminently pious minister will almost inevitably be successful in his blessed work. **The pity which he has learned to feel for souls, his unquenchable love for Jesus and his all absorbing zeal for the glory of God will impart to his working an earnestness that can scarcely fail of success.** Clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, which comes down to him in answer to his effectual fervent prayer, he will be sure of seeing the cause of Christ prospering in his hands. If he be a profound theologian, a ripe scholar or an eloquent speaker, his communion with God will hallow each gift and make it still more effective. If his attainments be of the most ordinary character, still the holy unction that accompanies his efforts will make them tell. This will make up wonderfully for other defects. Yes, it will often accomplish for the minister what no mere earthly advantages could. McCheyne well said: "A heated iron, though blunt, will pierce its way even where a much sharper instrument, if it be cold, cannot penetrate. So if our ministers only be filled with the Spirit, who is like fire, they will pierce into the hardest hearts where the sharpest wits cannot find their way." It was also a saying of his, **"A loving man will always accomplish more than a merely learned one."** Another of his rich aphorisms were, "It is not great talents that God blesses so much as great likeness to Christ. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God." The names of multitudes of pastors could be given which would prove that those who are the most godly are the most highly blest in saving souls and spreading that righteousness of which they are themselves bright examples.

**Their work is not that which merely dazzles for a moment and then leaves deeper darkness behind it.** It is abiding, and sends out great streams of influence for good that will cease neither in time nor in eternity. It is hoped that these emphatic reiterations of the fact that the pastor's deep piety is his real power will not be looked upon as platitudes. They may possibly be regarded by some who have not had much experience as commonplace truisms not needing mention. They have been repeated so often, and by so many, that here perhaps they may arrest scarcely any attention. But they cannot be thought of too profoundly. They are the words of truth and soberness. No true pastor but will understand their

great importance more and more as his experience increases. It cannot be repeated too often, nor made too emphatic, that **the pastor's great power is in his vital godliness. Nothing in this wide world will make up for the lack of it. Let experience be heard.** This is the testimony of all those who have been the most highly blest in their ministerial work. One such testimony may be given; it is that of one of the princes of Welsh preachers, Christmas Evans: "The pulpit orator falls infinitely too short of answering the desired effect unless the fire within him is kindled by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, for which he must pray in the name of Jesus, firmly believing in God's promise that he will give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him. This is the mystery of the art of eloquence of the man of God. He must be clothed with the power from on high. Here is the great inward secret." In this work of the ministry, as in everything else pertaining to the gospel, God's great rule is, "Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Let no one pass this point by until it has arrested his attention, sunken into his heart and fixed his life-purpose.

**Re: Ecstatic Feelings ~ Harmon A. Baldwin, on: 2006/6/1 8:28**

Quote:  
-----While Wesley strongly accuses Madam Guyon for teaching that God at times withdraws the consciousness of His presence and favor even from the soul that is cleansed, and says some good things about God not playing bo-peep with His children, yet, on the other hand, he admits the possibility of strong temptations clouding, temporarily, the work of God.  
-----

Did not God withdraw His presence from Jesus when He was in the wilderness --- on the cross? Why do you suppose He did this and what sustained Jesus when He did?

:)rm

**Re: RASA ~ Jessie Penn Lewis ~ SOME LIGHT UPON THE PERILS OF THE LAST DAYS - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2006/6/1 8:28**  
**SOME LIGHT UPON THE PERILS OF THE LAST DAYS**

Some select quotes

"THE forces of psuche (soul) arrayed against the forces of pneuma (spirit)," is the expressive sentence used by a correspondent in India, to describe the conflict in the unseen realm in these solemn days."

"This 'soul-force' is believed to be cultivated by prayer, fasting, and religious meditation. The Mohammedans point with pride to their gatherings for prayer in their Mosques. Consider the mass of Mohammed's at prayer in the great Jumna Mosque of Delhi, where an hundred thousand followers of Mahomet assemble inside the Mosque, with a still larger crowd engaged in prayer outside. It is here where 'soul-force' is generated! In the Mosques of India, which count by thousands upon thousands, where devout Mohammed's meet three times for prayer every day. It is here that the hidden springs of Islam lie. Every Mohammedan believes that the secret of world-power is in prayer, and what he believes, he practices. They 'pray', and lo (they believe) the council of European nations is set aside. What a lesson to Christendom!"

**"What are the 'forces of psuche' but the 'natural man' drawing out of his nature latent powers which are not of the Spirit of God."**

**"And the forces of 'pneuma', what are they? The power of God Himself as 'Spirit' brought into action through the spiritual man, born of the Spirit, walking after the Spirit, and praying to God on the ground of the Blood of Calvary. (See Revelation 8:3-5, as an example.)"**

"How this ignorant bringing into action of psychic force can affect spiritual believers has come to me in a recent letter. The writer says: "I have just come through a terrible onslaught of the enemy. Haemorrhage, heart affection, panting and exhaustion. My whole body in a state of collapse. It suddenly burst upon me while at prayer to pray against all psychic power exercised upon me by (psychic) 'prayer'. By faith in the power of the Blood of Christ, I cut myself off from it, and the result was remarkable. Instantly my breathing became normal, the haemorrhage stopped, exhaustion vanished, all pain fled, and life came back into my body. I have been refreshed and invigorated ever since. God let me know in confirmation

of this deliverance, **that my condition was the effect of a group of deceived souls who are in opposition to me ` praying' about me !** God has used me to the deliverance of two of them, but the rest are in an awful pit...."

"Let us remember that true Spirit-born prayer has its origination in the spirit, and that it is not the mind concentrating upon something the person desires under the cover of " prayer " language."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid49>) Jessie Penn Lewis

Now I think I understand why my pastor used to tell me he trusted me to pray for him? I never quite understood why before.

**Re: RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by iamhis, on: 2006/7/11 20:10**

How true your encouragement to fellowship is. It is all part of the journey. Even the scripture tells us that one can chase a thousand, and two will put ten thousand to flight. We need each other. The scripture tells us "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." God Bless!

**Re: RASA ~ Duncan Campbell ~ STEADFASTNESS IN CONDUCT - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/10/14 10:32**

Dredged up from an earlier day ... Some excerpts.

~~~~~  
"A clearer knowledge of the Divine scheme of grace, its eternal purposes, its application to man by Christ's redeeming work, a firmer grasp of the doctrine of grace, of God's free love in Christ, of Christ's full and complete satisfaction for sin, of justification by simple faith, a more intimate acquaintance with Christ the Giver and Fountain of grace, His offices, His sympathy, His power, a more thorough experience of the inward work of grace in the heart, this, this, this is the grand secret of heart strength. This is the old path of peace. This is the true panacea for restless consciences. It may seem at first too simple, too easy, too cheap, too commonplace, too plain. But all the wisdom of man will never show the heavy-laden a better road to heart-rest. Secret pride and self-righteousness, I fear, are too often the reason why this good old road is not used."

~~~~~  
"Word just comes of a native preacher, until recently a flaming evangelist. His wife was self-assertive. In a certain issue she was manifestly wrong. But the preacher took sides with his wife. He has compromised with the flesh. Now, peace in the home is a wonderful thing, but not at such a price. The Spirit has ceased to use this preacher. Moreover, God gives drastic directions concerning such things when He says, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods . . . Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God" (Deut. 13:6-10). This generation has been "graced" to spiritual softness and death. We do not "fear" as our forefathers did. We need the stiffening of Moses.

Has the reader noticed that when we ourselves are wrong we become very tender toward others who are wrong?--the reason being that we want tender handling. "But syrupy affection never yet led to spiritual integrity. And though it looks so like the charity which is greater than faith and hope, that it is 'admired of many,' it is not admirable. It is sin" (Amy Carmichael). Was the native preacher taken off his feet so easily because he was already unwatchful against the flesh? Did his wife only furnish the self-consideration for which he was already looking? The flesh gave "place to the devil." Satan is no

t divided against himself. Flesh always cliques up with flesh.

You are sensitive, "thin-skinned"? Why not call it sinful pride? The next time somebody reproves you, just say, "You don't know half the truth. If you knew me you would say much worse." This may help you into harmony with the Cross. It will at least be the truth."

~~~~~  
"Let us, who sit in the darkness, rekindle our fires, and see that what is necessary for the conquest of China, India and Japan is likewise necessary for the conquest of America. Say what you will about the Roman Catholic Church, and I hate her heads and all her heathen appendages, as Cardinal Newman termed them, but I passionately love her orthodoxy in caring for the orphan. It has been the strongest pillar in upholding that church and saving it from decay.

Amid the clashes of creeds and one generation making orthodox what another had declared heresy, I do not hesitate to say that indifference to benevolence in all ages has been the great heresy of Christendom. On the departure of the church from that cardinal principle, the door was opened for all kind of heresies; and when you read church history, you read the history of a church that is largely prodigal, because one of the chief sources of her life was almost closed. It is no surprise that worldly aggrandizement became her policy; but the religion of Jesus Christ is not in great church buildings, pipe-organs and pulpit oratory, but pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is to recognize the wants of the orphan and the aged as the wants of Christ himself, and go speedily to the help of Him who helped us out of sin into the light of pardon. By the side of faith in the Book must be unstinted practice of the Book. I care little about higher criticism or lower criticism, so long as this heresy is permitted to exist in Christendom with so little concern for its abolition.

It is as much our duty to think seriously of our obligation to the orphan and the aged as it was to think seriously of our obligation to be baptized."

~~~~~  
"I pray God only that He may depress your spirit even more than your body, and while He comforts the latter according to your need, that He may entirely vanquish the former. O how strong we are when we begin to perceive that we are but weakness and infirmity! Then we are ever ready to believe that we are mistaken, and to correct ourselves while confessing it; our minds are ever open to the illumination of others; then we are authoritative in nothing, and say the most decided things with simplicity and deference for others; then we do not object to be judged, and submit without hesitation to the censure of the first comer. At the same time, we judge no one without absolute necessity; we speak only to those who desire it, mentioning the imperfections we seem to have discovered, without dogmatism, and rather to gratify their wishes than from a desire to be believed or create a reputation for wisdom."

~~~~~  
"Are you given to gossip? The principle of curiosity is like the troubled sea that cannot rest. Does your tongue cast up a world of mire and dirt? We know a true minister who sought to control his tongue by taking a red hot poker and searing it. But the trouble was deeper. It was a heart matter. However, his attitude was right. He was willing to burn his tongue if that would help. He later learned how "through the Spirit" to mortify the deeds of the tongue."

~~~~~  
"Even though the believer has emerged from the muddle and mixedness of Romans 7 through Paul's command "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," the fact remains that he will discover many ways in which self seeks satisfaction through the as-yet-unredeemed spheres of his being. The flesh, the body, all "our mortal coil" is evidently still present in Romans 8. That chapter presents many ways in which mortification must set in. The victorious believer will become aware of many forms of self which must yet be dealt with. We shall discover: In our service for Christ, self-confidence and self-esteem; in the slightest suffering, self-saving and self-pity; in the least misunderstanding, self-defense and self-vindication; in our station in life, self-seeking and self-centeredness; in the smallest trials, self-inspection and self-accusation; in the daily routine, self-pleasing and self-choosing; in our relationships, self-assertiveness and self-respect; in our education, self-boasting and self-expression; in our desires, self-indulgence and self-satisfaction; in our successes, self-

admiration and self-congratulation; in our failures, self-excusing and self-justification; in our spiritual attainments, self-righteousness and self-complacency; in our public ministry, self-reflection and self-glory; in life as a whole, self-love and selfishness. The flesh is an "I" specialist."

~~~~~  
"Your mind is too much occupied with exterior things, and still worse, with argumentation, to be able to act with a frequent thought of God. I am always afraid of your excessive inclination to reason; it is a hinderance to that recollection and silence in which He reveals Himself. Be humble, simple, and sincerely abstracted with men; be recollected, calm, and devoid of reasonings before God. The persons who have heretofore had most influence with you, have been infinitely dry, reasoning, critical, and opposed to a true interior life. However little you might listen to them, you would hear only endless reasonings and a dangerous curiosity, which would insensibly draw you out of Grace and plunge you into the depths of Nature. Habits of long standing are easily revived; and the changes which cause us to revert to our original position are less easily perceived, because they are natural to our constitution. Distrust them, then; and beware of beginnings which, in fact, include the end.

It is now four months since I have had any leisure for study; but I am very happy to forego study, and not to cling to anything, when providence would take it away. It may be that during the coming winter I shall have leisure for my library, but I shall enter it then, keeping one foot on the threshold, ready to leave it at the slightest intimation. The mind must keep fasts as well as the body. I have no desire to write, or speak, or to be spoken about, or to reason, or to persuade any. I live every day aridly enough, and with certain exterior inconveniences which beset me; but I amuse myself whenever I have an opportunity, if I need recreation. Those who make almanacs upon me, and are afraid of me, are sadly deceived. God bless them! I am far from being so foolish as to incommode myself for the sake of annoying them. I would say to them as Abraham said to Lot: Is not the whole land before thee? If you go to the east, I will go to the west. (Gen. xiii. 9.)"