

Articles and Sermons :: Another principle by which a Christian should walk

Another principle by which a Christian should walk - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/9/28 2:24

Another principle by which a Christian should walk is this:

That there is no judging of the inward conditions of men — by the outward dispensations of God.

"For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." The greatness of our estates — is no argument of the goodness of our hearts. To prize ourselves by what we have — and not by what we are; is to estimate the value of the jewel — by the box which contains it. Grace and gold can live together; but the smallest degree of grace in the heart, is preferable to a thick chain of gold around the neck.

Here on earth, it is sometimes evil with the righteous — and well with the wicked. Those who live most upon God, sometimes fare worst in the world. Under the law, the dove was preferred in sacrifice — to the swine. Riches are called 't hick clay'. They are more likely to weaken the back — than strengthen the heart. You cannot read the wrath of God — in the black lines of adversity; or the love of God — in the white lines of prosperity.

God often gives a full cup of temporal blessings to wicked men, though there are dregs at the bottom. They may be fruitful vines — and yet only laden with sour grapes. It is seldom that the sparkling diamond of a great estate — is set in the golden ring of a pious heart. Riches have made many good men — worse; but they never made any bad man — better. Thus if we discern but a spark of grace in a nobleman, we cry it up as a blazing comet, and speak of it in the superlative degree.

Though a Christian is made happy in the world — yet he is not made happy by the world. Give me those judgments which give birth to mercy — rather than those outward mercies which give birth to judgment. There are many who are temporally happy, who will be eternally miserable; and many are now temporally miserable, who will be eternally happy.

If poverty could procure Heaven — how many poor people would then be saved; and if wealth could free a man from Hell — how very few of the rich would be damned! The kingdom of Christ — is the kingdom of the cross. Those who attempt to take the cross from the Christian's shoulders, do, in effect, aim to remove the crown from his head.

"God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good — and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." The sun of prosperity shines upon the dunghill — as well as upon beds of spices. The rain of adversity falls upon the fruitful garden — as well as the barren wilderness. The abundance of the infidel is a golden chain — to bind him to the earth; and the apparent miseries of the believer are as fiery chariots — to convey him to Heaven!

"Now, those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them, go free of harm." God's jewels may here be trodden under foot — but hereafter, they will be fixed in His royal diadem. If we look for a saint, he is not always to be found upon a bed of down — but sometimes he has been seen on a heap of dust. Poor Lazarus rises to Heaven — and rich Dives sinks to Hell.

Benjamin was not the less regarded by Joseph, because the silver cup was discovered in his sack. We must not infer the absence of God's affections — from the presence of numerous afflictions. Though the north wind may chill us — yet the warm beams of summer can soon revive us. Those stones which are designed for the building are frequently wounded by the chisel; while those which are neglected lie in ruinous heaps.

A saint is glorious in his misery — but a sinner is miserable amidst all his glory. We must not therefore think evil of true religion, though we should behold a Joseph in the prison, while a Pharaoh is in a palace; or a Job on the ash-heap, while a Julian is on a throne. The most choice pearls are often enclosed in the most hideous shells. "Judge nothing according to appearance — but judge righteous judgment." Those who judge of a man's real greatness by his apparent grandeur, are unfit to sit upon the judicial bench. That apple which has the fairest skin — may have the rottenest core.

The tinsel glare upon a sinner, is too apt to blind the weak eyes of a saint. Alas, why should he envy him a little light — who is to be shrouded in everlasting darkness! Why should we throw bludgeons at those boughs — which are only laden with poisonous fruits! "Deliver my soul from the wicked — who have their portion in this life." The things of the world

are the only happiness of the men of the world. None of their flowers grow in paradise. They are anxious for the creature — and indifferent about the Creator.

A man's estate in this world may be great — and yet his state for the eternal world may be fearful. God may say to him as to Pharaoh, "For this purpose have I raised you up — that I might show My power upon you." The same hand which now pours abundance on ungodly men like oil — will soon pour down wrath upon them like fire. Under all their wealth — their hearts are sinful; and after all the riches are fled — their situation will be doleful! It is far better to pass through the Valley of Baca (Valley of Weeping), to Zion; than to pitch our tents in the plains of Sodom. Luther's expression was not the less true because it was homely: "The whole Turkish empire is but a crust — which God threw to the dogs." One said, "I would rather have Paul's plain coat, with his heavenly graces — than the purple robes of princes, with all their kingdoms."

Lest riches should be accounted evil in themselves, God sometimes gives them to the righteous; and lest they should be considered as the chief good, God frequently bestows them on the wicked. But they are more generally the portion of God's enemies — than His friends.

Alas, what is it to receive, and not to be received! Alas, what is it to have no other dews of blessing — than such as shall be followed with showers of brimstone! We may compass ourselves with sparks of security — and afterwards be secured in eternal misery! This world is a floating island, and sure as we cast anchor upon it, we shall be carried away by it.

He can never lack treasure, who has such a golden mine as God! He is enough without the creature — but the creature is not anything without Him. It is, therefore, better to enjoy Him without anything else — than to enjoy everything else without Him. It is better to be a wooden vessel filled with wine, than a golden vessel filled with water.

William Secker