

Articles and Sermons :: God bears a greater respect to their hearts than He does to their works.

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Another principle which believers should walk by, is this:

That God bears a greater respect to their hearts — than He does to their works.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." God looks most — where man looks least. We cannot trust God to too much — or ourselves to too little. God is our merciful keeper; the heart is our barbarous traitor.

"My son — give Me your heart!" God, who is all in all to us — calls for that which is all in all in us. We may commit our estates into the hands of men; but we must not commit our hearts into the hands of any but God. None of our hearts are so good — but He deserves them; and none so bad — but He can refine them. On whom do parents bestow their hearts — but upon their children? And on whom should children bestow their hearts — but upon their parents?

Ah, how unwilling is man to give — what he has no right to keep! As God prefers the heart to everything, such is the wickedness of man — that he will give God anything, but the heart!

"This people draws near unto Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips — but their heart is far from Me." Heartless operations, are but hearty deceptions. Men may keep their works to themselves, if they refuse to yield their hearts to Jesus Christ. He who regards the heart, without anything, He also, will not regard anything, without the heart.

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship." He who makes all He has — has a right to have all He makes. The formalist is all for outward activity — and the pietist is all for inward sincerity. The formalist has nothing within him, therefore he is for that which is outward. The pietist has nothing without him, therefore he is for that which is inward. But it is not the pretense of inward sincerity, which can justify outward impiety. Nor will a show of outward piety — be an excuse for inward hypocrisy.

Though the brain is the spring of cognitive motion — yet the heart is the original spring of vital motion. The heart is the first that lives — and the last that dies. "Wash your heart from wickedness! How long shall vain thoughts lodge within you!" Vain thoughts defile the heart — as well as vile thoughts. Snails leave their slime behind them — as well as serpents. If the mildew takes hold of a single thread — it will soon spread over the whole piece. Though sinful thoughts will rise — yet they must not reign. Though these foul birds may hover over the Christian's heart — yet he does not allow them to build their nests in it!

The devil knows, that if there is any choice treasure — it is in our hearts; and he would gladly have the key of these cabinets — that he might rob us of our jewels! A heart which is sanctified, is better than a tongue which is silvered. A spiritual man may pray carnally — but a carnal man cannot pray spiritually. If God's mercies do not eat out the heart of our sins — our sins will soon eat out the heart of our duties! A work which is heartless, is a work which is fruitless. God cares nothing for the decorated cabinet — but for the precious jewel.

It is said of Hannibal, the great Carthaginian commander, that he was the first who went into the field of battle — and the last who came out of it. Thus should it be in all the operations of a Christian — the heart should be the first that comes into the house of God, and the last that goes out of it. In prayer, the heart should first speak the words — and then the words should speak the sentiments of the heart. If the heart is indicting a good matter — the tongue will then be as the pen of a ready writer.

It is observed of the spider, that in the morning, before she seeks her prey, she mends her broken web; and in doing this, she always begins in the middle. And shall those who call themselves Christians, rise and pursue the callings and profits of the world, and yet be unconcerned about the broken webs of their lives, and especially of their hearts?

Those who would have the wells run with wholesome water — should look well to the springs that supply them. The Christian's heart is the guest room — where the King of glory takes up His residence. That which is most worthy in us, is

ould be resigned to Him who is most worthy of us. Good words without the heart, are but flattery! And good works without the heart — are but hypocrisy! Though God pities stumbling Christians — yet He punishes steady hypocrites!

It is reported of Cranmer, that after his flesh and bones were consumed in the flames — his heart was found whole. A gracious man is clothed with sincerity — in the midst of his infirmities. "God is a spirit, and those who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit, and in truth." None can ever give Him the heart of their services, unless they are enabled to give Him their hearts in their services. The sorrowful sighing of the heart in worship — is preferable to the most elevated and harmonious voice. One is the production of grace — the other is the exertion of nature. Pride may be at the root of one — but God is the foundation of the other. One may ravish our ears — but the other ravishes God's heart!

It is said of the Lacedemonians, who were a poor and stupid people — that they offered lean sacrifices to their gods; and that the Athenians, who were a wise and wealthy people — offered fat and costly sacrifices. And yet in their wars, the Lacedemonians had always the mastery of the Athenians. Whereupon, the Athenians went to "the oracle" to know the reason why those should fare worst — who gave most. The oracle returned this answer to them, "That the Lacedemonians were a people, who gave their hearts to their gods; but that the Athenians only gave their gifts to their gods." Thus a heart without a gift — is better than a gift without a heart!

True religion is a sacrifice — but the heart is the altar upon which it must be offered. As the body is at the command of the head which rules it; so should the soul be at the command of God, Who gives it. For a man to take his body to the service of God, and leave his soul behind him — is as if a person should send his garments stuffed with straw, instead of making a personal appearance.

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