

Devotional Thoughts :: MAY 11 - THOUGHTS BY WILLIAM MACDONALD

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“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and liath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.” (Jer. 48:11)

Jeremiah here takes an illustration from the art of wine-making to teach us that a life of ease does not produce strength of character.

Whenever wine is being fermented in casks or vats, lees or dregs settle to the bottom. If the wine is left undisturbed, it becomes unpalatable. So the vintner must pour out the wine from vessel to vessel, eliminating the dregs and impurities. When he does this, the wine develops strength, aroma, color and flavor.

Moab had lived a life of ease. He had never suffered the disruption of going into captivity. He had insulated himself from troubles, trials and privations. The result was that his life was flat and insipid. It lacked fragrance and piquancy.

What is true of wine is true of us also. We need disruption, opposition, difficulties and disturbances to rid us of impurities and to develop the graces of a Christ-filled life.

Our natural tendency is to protect ourselves from anything that would unsettle us. We strive unceasingly to nestle.

But God’s will for us is that our lives should be a perpetual crisis of dependence on Him. He is forever stirring up the nest.

In her biography of Hudson Taylor, Mrs. Howard Taylor wrote: “This life that was to be made a blessing the wide world over must pass through a very different process (i.e., different from being settled on his lees), including much of that emptying and re-emptying ‘from vessel to vessel’, so painful to the lower nature, from which we are being refined.”

When we realize what the Divine Vintner is seeking to accomplish in our lives, it saves us from rebellion and teaches us submission and dependence. We learn to say:

Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou wondering own His way,
How wise, how strong His hand.
Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear.