

Articles and Sermons :: Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . .

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/11 22:51

If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . .

Talks on Spiritual Philosophy

Introduction

Lectures on biblical philosophy given at the Bible Training College, London, from January to July 1912.

Always a voracious reader of wide-ranging taste, Chambers included the writings of many philosophers in his personal study. During Oswald's student days at the University of Edinburgh (1895-1896), he very likely studied Metaphysics and the History of Philosophy under Professor Andrew Seth and Moral Philosophy under Professor Henry Calderwood. In addition, he may well have attended Dr. Alexander Whyte's Young Men's Classes, held every Sunday evening following the service at Free St. George's Church. When Chambers arrived in Edinburgh, Dr. Whyte was dealing with "The Mystics," including Tauler and the book, *Theologia Germanica*, which are both quoted throughout *If Thou Wilt Be Perfect*.

In 1900, Chambers was teaching philosophy at Dunoon College, a small theological school across the Firth of Clyde from Glasgow, Scotland. When his students, most of whom had no university training, expressed their difficulty in making sense of existing textbooks, Chambers compiled and published his own *Outlines for the Study of Historical Philosophy* as a guide for his classes.

Of his lecture series on Biblical Philosophy at the Bible Training College; in 1912, Chambers said: "The Ethics and Philosophy classes have taken a great stride in advance, and this is all the more surprising as the Bible Philosophy class is anything but a popular subject as commonly conceived; yet the numbers attending this class grow."

One of Chambers' recurring themes was the critical necessity for every Christian to think. "The reason why the average Christian worker is only the average Christian worker," Oswald told his students, "is that he or she will remain grossly ignorant about what he does not see any need for. All of you have intelligence, and you must use it for God."

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/11 22:55

Foreword

On Tauler and on *Theologia Germanica*

Two names are mentioned in this book, one is a man, Tauler, and the other a volume, *Theologia Germanica*. Quotations are made from them. Both belong to pre-Reformation times. John Tauler was born in Strasbourg about 1300. He was a Dominican monk and had already achieved honour and reputation as a preacher when a great change occurred in his spiritual outlook. An unknown layman, after hearing him preach, was moved to tell him that he was allowing himself to be "killed by the letter" and was yet in darkness, and had not tasted the sweetness of the Holy Ghost. The preacher took the words in a spirit of meekness and was ready to receive helpful counsel from his unknown friend. "You must," he said, "take up your cross and follow our Lord Jesus Christ and His example in utter sincerity, humility and patience, and must let go all your proud reasoning." He advised him to cease his preaching for a while and in quiet contemplation examine his life in the mirror of our Lord's. Tauler was nearly fifty, but he took the place of abasement and self-surrender, and for nearly two years was a seeker of God's way, praying that God's life might be brought forth in him. His former friends thought him demented. When the clear light came and he knew the time had come to bear his witness in public, he found it not easy to begin, but soon wisdom and grace from the Holy Spirit were bestowed in abundant measure. So began years of wonderful work for God. In those days when salvation by simple faith in Jesus Christ was so largely hidden beneath ceremonial worship, he taught many that the way to God was by a New Birth that brought men into a vital relation to the Living God. His sermons greatly influenced Luther

. They have ministered to many in many countries. A volume of his sermons has been published in English under the title, *The Following of Christ*.

The book, *Theologia Germanica*, belongs to the same period. Its author is unknown. That also prepared for the Reformation, as it lays stress on the Holy Spirit's application of Christ's work to the heart of a believer. God never leaves Himself without a witness, and in that bedimmed period these lights were shining and have been shining ever since.

John Wesley complained to William Law that when he was an earnest inquirer he had been directed to the mystic writers, and so had missed the basic truth of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. We all need to know the initial experience of Christ as the Propitiation for our sins, and as the One who has brought to a world of sinners the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. Afterwards we may find, as Wesley did, much light in such writers as the above upon how God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, and how we can work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12-13).

The quotations made by Oswald Chambers are themselves of great value, and the expository words that follow are full of luminous and practical teaching for us to-day.

London
David Lambert
April 1939

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/11 23:03

The Philosophy of Perfection

But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 1 Corinthians 13:10 (rv)

"That which is perfect" is a Being, who hath comprehended and included all things in Himself and His own Substance, and without whom, and besides whom, there is no true Substance, and in whom all things have their Substance.

That Which Is Perfect

The Bible reveals that "that which is perfect" is a Being. God is the only Perfect Being; no human being is perfect apart from God. We make the blunder of applying to human beings terms which the Bible applies to God only. Our Lord in replying to the rich young ruler, who used the term "Good Master," said, "None is good save One, even God" (rv). There is only one Being to whom the term "good" can be applied, and that is the Perfect Being, the term cannot be applied to good men. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord places God as the model for Christian character; He does not say, "Be good as a man is good," but "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (rv). We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, not by struggle and effort, but by the impartation of that which is Perfect. We are accustomed to the use of the word "perfect" in connection with our relationship to God (e.g. Philippians 3:12-15), but here the word is used in a bigger sense, viz. perfect as God is perfect.

"Love" is another term we are apt to apply wrongly. We emphasise perfect love towards our fellow-men; the Bible emphasises perfect love to God. Love is an indefinable word, and in the Bible it is always used as directly characteristic of God—"God is love." In Romans 5:5, Paul says that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," not the power to love God, but the love of God.

Or take Truth. The Truth is our Lord Himself; consequently any part of the truth may be a lie unless it leads to a relation to the Truth. Salvation, sanctification, the Second Coming are all parts of the Truth, but none is the Truth; and they are only parts of the Truth as they are absorbed by the Truth, our Lord Himself. We are not told to expound the way of salvation, or to teach sanctification, but to lift up Jesus, i.e. to proclaim the truth.

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/13 12:38

That Which Is Perception (﻿1 Corinthians 2:11-16﻿; ﻿1 John 2:27﻿)

Perception means the power of discernment. ﻿Â﻿To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?﻿Â﻿(rv). We all see the common occurrences of daily life, but who amongst us can perceive ﻿the arm of the Lord behind them? who can perceive behind the thunder the voice of God? The characteristic of the man with out the Spirit of God is that he has no power of perception, he cannot perceive GodÂ's working behind ordinary occurrences. The events of ordinary days and nights present facts we cannot explain, the only way to explain them is by receiving the Spirit of God Who will impart to us an interpretation that will keep the heart strong and confident in God, because it gives us an understanding of God Who is behind all things; but to the one who is not there, the explanations seem absurd.

Perception in the natural world is called intuitionÂ—I know I know, although I do not know how I know. In the spiritual world this knowledge is the ﻿Â﻿anointing﻿Â﻿the Apostle John alludes to. When the Holy Spirit is in us He will never let us stop at the part experience. He will cause our part experience to keep us always one with the Perfect and will reveal God to us. If ever we imagine that the Spirit of God gives us an illumination apart from the written Word, Satan is twisting the truth, and it is this kind of passage that he distorts most.

The﻿ things which are in part﻿ cannot be apprehended, known and expressed; but the Perfect cannot be apprehended, known and expressed by any creature as creature.

Peter tells us to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning ﻿the hope that is in us.﻿ He did not say give reasonings, but a reason. We can give a reason for that we know, but we cannot reason it out with the man who has not the same spirit. We can state that we are right with God because we have received His Spirit on the word of Jesus, but our reasonings are nonsense to the man who has not accepted the Holy Spirit.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/13 12:42

The Coming of the Perfect (﻿John 17:22﻿; ﻿Psalm 86:11﻿)

Now when that which is Perfect is come, then ﻿that which is in part﻿ shall be done away. But when doth it come? I say, when as much as may be, it is known, felt and tasted of the soul. . . . So also God who is the Highest Good, willeth not to hide Himself from any, wheresoever He findeth a devout soul, that is thoroughly purified from all creatures. For in what measure we put off the creature, in the same measure are we able to put on the Creator, neither more nor less.

Â﻿That they may be one﻿Â﻿—in experience? No, ﻿Â﻿that they may be one, even as We are one.﻿Â﻿ That is infinitely beyond experience, it is a perfect oneness not only in adjustment but in realisation. In our spiritual experience it means knowing thatÂ—Â﻿In all the world there is none but Thee, my God, there is none but Thee.﻿Â﻿ Other people have become shadows, the creature we used to rely upon has proved ﻿a broken reed,﻿ the spiritual experience we built upon has deserted us, the methods of guidance that used to bless our souls starve us now. This is illustrated in the purifying of AbrahamÂ's faith, the purification went on until Abraham was lost in God. He did not lose his identity, he reached his identity in God. The hymns that are full of absorption in God are true of deepest spiritual experience, but only true in the fundamental sense, in the surface sense they are in error.

The Psalmist prayed, ﻿Â﻿Unite my heart to fear Thy name﻿Â﻿Â﻿the whole spirit, soul and body so united with God that the soul does not think separately of body, soul or spirit, but only of God. There are also unities possible in a manÂ's experience whereby manÂ's spirit, soul and body are brought into harmony. ﻿Paul calls these things idolatry,﻿﻿Â﻿ because idolatry is the ﻿uniting of body, soul and spirit to the wrong god.﻿

If we are despising the chastening of the Lord and fainting when ﻿rebuked of Him,﻿﻿ it is because

se we do not understand what God is doing; He is weaning us from creatures to Himself, from the things we have been united to instead of being united to Him only. When God is weaning a soul from creatures, from Christian experience, from teachers and friends, then is the time that the devil begins the advocacy of self-pity. Satan tried to make Jesus realise Himself apart from God (see Matthew 16:23), but He would not—“For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (rv). When we are filled with the Holy Spirit He unites us body, soul and spirit with God until we are one with God even as Jesus was. This is the meaning of the Atonement—at-one-ment with God.

The one perfect Personality is our Lord. When we separate ourselves from Jesus we are in part, we are not perfect but when the life of Jesus comes into us we no more think of the separating of spirit, soul and body, we think of Jesus only. Remember, we are not sanctified for our sakes, but for God’s sake. How many of us are trying to exploit God with the diplomacy which the world uses? We try to exploit God when we pray—“O Lord, give me this gift, this experience.” That is the spirit which springs from the devil, we are trying to ape being devout souls, trying to be like Christians, but wanting a relation to God on our own lines. We can only get rightly related to God through Jesus Christ. The coming of the Perfect means that we are made one with God by Jesus. Immediately we are rightly related to God, perfectly adjusted to Him, the Perfect life comes to us and through us.

Chambers, O.

Re: Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/13 12:58

The Conversion of the Part

. . . it is impossible to the creature in virtue of its creature-nature and qualities, that of which it saith “I and myself” to be perfect. For in whatsoever creature the Perfect shall be known, therein the creature-nature and qualities, I, the Self and the like, must all be lost and done away.

Our Lord told the rich young ruler; to fling away all he had, to think of himself as possessing nothing—“Be a mere conscious man and give that manhood to Me. Lose altogether the sense of yourself as one who wants to be blessed and be related to God in Me” (see Matthew 19:21).

So long as we think much of these things, cleave to them with love, joy, pleasure or desire, so long remaineth the Perfect unknown to us.

If we seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost in order that God may make us great servants of His, we shall never receive anything. God baptises us with the Holy Ghost that He may be All in all.

Numbers of people say, “I have asked God to sanctify me and He has not done it.” Of course He has not! Do we find one word in the Bible which tells us to pray, “Lord, sanctify me”? What we do read is that God sanctifies what we give. An unconditional “give up” is the condition of sanctification, not claiming something for ourselves. This is where unscriptural holiness teaching has played so much havoc with spiritual experience. We receive from God on one condition only, viz. that we yield ourselves to Him and are willing to receive nothing. Immediately we state conditions and say, “I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit,” “I want to be delivered from sin,” “I want to be the means of saving souls”—we may pray to further orders; but an answer will never come that way. That is all the energy of the flesh, it has no thought of the claims of Jesus on the life. Are we willing to be baptised into His death? How much struggle is there in a dead man? How much assertion of “I” and “me” and “mine”? “I have had such a wonderful experience”? The Spirit of God will never witness to testimonies along that line, they are not true to the genius of the Holy Ghost, not true to the nature of Jesus. “Whosoever shall confess Me before men,” said Jesus. If there is a tightness and a dryness in our experience it is because we have begun to take the advice of someone other than God, have begun to try and make our experience like someone else said it should be. “But they, . . . measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding” (rv).

Chambers, O.

Re: Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/3/13 14:00

“You must,” he said, “take up your cross and follow our Lord Jesus Christ and His example in utter sincerity, humility and patience, and must let go all your proud reasoning.” He advised him to cease his preaching for a while and in quiet contemplation examine his life in the mirror of our Lord’s. Tauler was nearly fifty, but he took the place of abasement and self-surrender, and for nearly two years was a seeker of God’s way, praying that God’s life might be brought forth in him. His former friends thought him demented. When the clear light came and he knew the time had come to bear his witness in public, he found it not easy to begin, but soon wisdom and grace from the Holy Spirit were bestowed in abundant measure. So began years of wonderful work for God. In those days when salvation by simple faith in Jesus Christ was so largely hidden beneath ceremonial worship, he taught many that the way to God was by a New Birth that brought men into a vital relation to the Living God.

Sorry to interrupt your thread, but this really touched me. God says You will seek and find me says the Lord when you seek me with all your heart. Have I really sought him with all my heart? To have an experience of that nature where the lights go on, and you see the world through eyes of the risen saviour, what blessedness what joy.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/15 10:06

Hi ZekeO,

Quote:
-----Sorry to interrupt...

Please do!

There is some tremendous thought throughout this, it has taken some constraint not to jump ahead though there have been bits and pieces snatched and placed elsewhere.

Quote:
-----To have an experience of that nature where the lights go on, and you see the world through eyes of the risen saviour, what blessedness what joy.

Indeed! Think he really drives it home as it progress's...

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/15 10:11

The Concentration of Perception (﻿John 15:5﻿; ﻿Philippians 4:13﻿)

That which hath flowed forth from it, is no true Substance, and hath no Substance except in the Perfect, but is an accident, or a brightness, or a visible appearance, which is no Substance, and hath no Substance except in the fire whence the brightness flowed forth, such as the sun or a candle.

﻿“Without Me ye can do nothing.﻿”﻿ If we are not spiritual we will say that is not true, but if we are spiritual we know it is true. Our Lord said many things that are only true in the domain in which He spoke them. For instance, He said, “Ye have not life in yourselves﻿” (﻿John 6:53﻿ rv). We have life, but not in the domain Jesus means. We are alive physically, alive morally and intellectually without Jesus, but we are not alive spiritually. “Ye have not this life in yourselves.﻿” ﻿“If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself﻿”﻿ (rv). What is God’s will? That we should receive His Spirit, and ﻿God will give us the Holy Spirit if we ask.﻿ If we put ourselves in the condition of paupers and waive all right to the gift and are willing to receive, then Jesus said, God will put into us the Spirit that is in Him. When we have received the Holy Spirit we begin to realise that what Jesus said is true, ﻿“without Me ye can do nothing﻿”﻿—in the spiritual life. If some of us are asked to give our testimony, to speak in the open air, to take a meeting, we faint because we have not learned the lesson of drawing on the Perfect life, of drawing on Jesus. ﻿“Without Me﻿”﻿—not hinging; but﻿“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.﻿”﻿

Have we ever come to the place of saying, "Lord, do in me all Thou dost want to do?" We ask God to do much less than this and think we are asking for tremendous things; we have to come to the place of saying, "Lord, I ask that Thy will may be done in me." The will of God is the gladdest, brightest, most bountiful thing possible to conceive, and yet some of us talk of the will of God with a terrific sigh—"Oh well, I suppose it is the will of God," as if His will were the most calamitous thing that could befall us.

Are we learning to think and perceive and interpret Christian experience along this line? When people come to us, are we so relying on the Holy Spirit that He can easily lead them to Jesus, or are we trying to make their square lives fit into our round experience, trying to fit their broad experience into our poor narrow waistcoat-pocket experience? We are off our territory on those lines; we are here for one purpose only, to be taken up with Jesus.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/16 9:25

The Principle of Sin (1 John 5:8-12)

The Scripture and the Faith and the Truth say, Sin is nought else, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable Good and betaketh itself to the changeable; that is to say, that it turneth away from the Perfect to that which is in part and imperfect, and most often to itself.

This is the principle of sin. Anything in spiritual life or in sensual life that makes us draw our life from anything less than God is of the essence of sin. God made man to have dominion over the life of the sea and air and earth; but God was to have dominion over man. Adam sinned by taking his claim to his right to himself. This claim to my right to myself works in those who are born again, and it is called the carnal mind. It expresses itself like this—"I want the baptism of the Holy Ghost; I want to be sanctified; I want to be filled with the Spirit; I want to be used of God." All that springs from the wrong source, it is not drawing its life from the right place. When we receive and recognise and rely on the Holy Spirit, all that stops for ever. We have to walk in the light, as He is in the light; the light that Jesus walked in (see John 6:38; 14:10).

The Presence of Sin (John 5:30-32; Romans 1:25)

When the creature claimeth for its own anything good, such as Substance, Life, Knowledge, Power, and in short whatever we should call good, as if it were that, or possessed that, or that were itself or that proceeded from it—as often as this cometh to pass, the creature goeth astray.

The one characteristic of love is that it thinks of nothing for itself, it is absorbed in God. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not . . . love taketh not account of the evil. We cannot live as Jesus lived by trying to imitate Him. Jesus called a little child to Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord was not setting up a child as an ideal, but as a fact. A child does not work from a conscious ambition, it obeys the law of the life that is in him without thinking. When we are born again and rightly related to God we will live the right kind of life without thinking. Immediately we begin to think about it, we fix our eyes on our own whiteness and go wrong. Much of the holiness teaching of to-day makes people fix their eyes on their own whiteness, not on Jesus Christ—"I give up this and that, I fast here, I do this and the other, I will give up anything and everything to possess a perfect life." We will never get it in that way, but only by the passion of an absolute devotion to Jesus and that is only possible by receiving the Holy Spirit and obeying Him.

The Propagation of Sin (1 John 3:4-8; Isaiah 14:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Colossians 2:20-23)

What did the devil do else, or what was his going astray and his fall else, but that he claimed for himself to be also somewhat, and would have it that somewhat was his, and something was due to him? This setting up of a claim and his "I" and "me" and "mine," these were his going astray, and his fall. And thus it is to this day.

John's argument is not to do with an act of sin, but with the disposition of sin. It is this that the devil propagates in human beings. Why don't we realise what God's Book says? We talk about chopping off this, and doing that, and having it

mes of consecration to God. The only test of holiness is that the life of Jesus is being manifested in our mortal flesh, and that we are not appealed to on the lines He was not appealed to on; nothing springs up in us and says, "Now that is mine." The perfect love is given to us freely by the grace of God, and we can hinder it when we like, no matter what our experience has been, if we cease drawing on the life of God. Anything we possess as our own, as a possession of our own personality, is the very essence and principle of sin at work. "If any man will come after Me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself"; literally, let him give up his right to himself to Me, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. Our Lord said this over and over again, but we have come to the conclusion that He did not mean what He said and we piously and reverently pass it over.

The quotations are from the book entitled Theologia Germanica.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/20 9:09

Chapter II

The Philosophy of the Fall—I

Boundless Inheritance of Covetousness

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (Romans 7:7;)

It is said, it was because Adam ate the apple that he was lost, or fell. I say, it was because of his claiming something for his own, and because of his I, Mine, Me and the like. Had he eaten seven apples, and yet never claimed anything for his own, he would not have fallen: but as soon as he called something his own, he fell, and would have fallen if he had never touched an apple.

What is true of Adam is true of every man and woman, and not all mankind could amend his fall, or bring him back from going astray. This inheritance of covetousness is the very essence of the Fall, and no praying and no power of man, singly or banded together, can ever avail to touch it; the only thing that can touch it is the great Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lust and covetousness are summed up in the phrase, "I must have it at once and for myself." It is an absolute flood in the nature of man, it overtakes his spirit, it overtakes his soul and body. In some natures the spirit of covetousness works through the body and is seen in sordid ways; sometimes it is kept back and only in man's reason is it manifested; and sometimes it is held still further back and suppressed, but it is there. The background of the whole thing is the lust of possessing according to my affinities.

(a) Birth of Death

"For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17;). Death is the inheritance of the whole human race; since Adam, no man has ever been alive to God saving by the supernatural act of re-birth. Do not get the idea that because man did not die suddenly physically, he is not dead. The manifestation of death in the body is simply a matter of time, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The birth of death was in that moment; not the birth of death for one man, but the birth of the death of the whole human race; God's attitude revealed in the Bible towards men is that they are dead in trespasses and sins; no touch with God, not alive towards God at all, they are quite indifferent to God's claims.

(b) The Bye-Law of Death

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one . . ." (Romans 5:17;). A bye-law is a supplementary regulation, and the bye-law of death is a supplementary regulation on account of disobedience. "For I was alive without the law once," said the Apostle Paul, "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Romans 7:9-10;). We are all alive apart from God in our own consciousness, and when preachers talk about being dead in trespasses and sins, good worldly-minded men and women are amused at our being so stupid as to tell them they are dead. They say, "I am alive, my body is alive; my mind and heart

and soul and spirit are alive; what do you mean by being dead? But immediately a soul comes into contact with Jesus Christ's standard, instantly the realisation comes of what death means.

(c) Branded by Death

"For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Every natural virtue is death-branded, because the natural virtues are remnants of a ruined humanity, they are not promises of an evolving perfection. Take the life of the intellect or of the spirit, where does it end? He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Love produces such pain (apart from a knowledge of God) that it makes the sensitive soul wonder if it is worth while to love. Death is everywhere, on the attainments of the mind, of the heart and spirit. When you try to approach God in prayer and draw near to Him, you find the curse of this disposition of covetousness—I must have this for myself, I want to be right with God for my own sake—and it saps the energy out of devotion, out of communion with God and Christian service, until the soul is almost wrung to despair. It is that kind of thing which made the Apostle Paul say—sold under sin. We have to get down to this aspect of sin which is not familiar to us as a rule.

Talk about conviction of sin! I wonder how many of us have ever had one five minutes' conviction of sin. It is the rarest thing to know of a man or woman who has been convicted of sin. I am not sure but that if in a meeting one or two people came under the tremendous conviction of the Holy Ghost, the majority of us would not advocate they should be put in a lunatic asylum, instead of referring them to the Cross of Christ. We are unfamiliar nowadays with this tremendous conviction of sin, which Paul refers to as being sold under sin, but it is not a bit too strong to say that when once the Spirit of God convicts a man of sin, it is either suicide or the Cross of Christ, no man can stand such conviction long. We have any amount of conviction about pride and wrong dealing with one another, but when the Holy Ghost convicts He does not bother us on that line, He gives us the deep conviction that we are living in independence of God, of a death away from God, and we find all our virtues and goodness and religion has been based on a ruinous thing, viz. the boundless inheritance of covetousness. That is what the Fall means. Let it soak into your thinking, and you will understand the marvel of the salvation of Jesus Christ which means deliverance from covetousness, root and branch. Never lay the flattering unction to your soul that because you are not covetous for money or worldly possessions, you are not covetous for anything. The fuss and distress of owning anything is the last remnant of the disposition of sin. Jesus Christ possessed nothing for Himself (see 2 Corinthians 8:9). Right through the warp and woof of human nature is the ruin caused by the disposition of covetousness which entered into the human race through the Fall, and it is this disposition which the Holy Spirit convicts of.

Chambers, O.

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Beatific Incarnation (Romans 5:1-11)

But how shall my fall be amended? It must be healed as Adam's fall was healed, and on the self-same wise. . . . And in this bringing back and healing, I can, or may, or shall do nothing of myself, but just simply yield to God, so that He alone may do all things in me and work, and I may suffer Him and all His work and His divine will.

The Atonement means that in the Cross of Jesus Christ God redeemed the whole human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. Jesus Christ never applied the words "children of the devil" to ordinary sinners, He applied them to religious disbelievers. Nowhere is it taught in the Bible that we are by nature children of the devil; Paul says we were by nature the children of wrath. How many men and women do we know who have seen what Jesus Christ came to do, who really knew He came to save them from sin and who have deliberately said, "No, I won't let Him"? The majority of men are sheep, as Jesus said, and the bias of the Fall leads them astray.

(a) Ruined Race

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). The prophecy here does not refer to the destruction of sin in the individual, but to the destruction of what the Apostle Paul calls "the body of sin," symbolised in the first incarnation of the devil as a serpent. The body of sin stands as the counterpart of the Mystical Body of Christ. The fountain head of the body of sin is the devil; the Fountain Head of the mystical body of Christ is God. The disposition of covetousness which entered in at the Fall, connects me with the body of sin;

in the personal experience of sanctification this disposition of covetousness is identified with the Cross of Christ. "that the body of sin might be destroyed." The more people there are who enter into sanctification through Jesus Christ, the more is Satan's dominance ruined. The body of sin is maimed and paralysed by every being who enters into the Mystical Body of Christ through His salvation. "The carnal mind," which is "enmity against God," is my connection with the body of sin; but the body of sin is something infinitely greater than the carnal mind, it is the mystical body of sin with the devil at its head, which Jesus Christ came to destroy (1 John 3:8), and in His sanctified children is manifested the bruising of Satan and the enfeebling of the body of sin, until at the final wind-up of everything, the body of sin and the devil are absolutely removed, not only in the individual saints but from the presence of the saints. Satan is not removed now from the presence of the saints, but the saint is still kept in the world where the evil one rules, consequently the saint is continually being badgered by the evil one. Jesus prayed, not that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil one; (rv)

(b) Realised Right of Saved Souls (Romans 6:12-14)

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). Paul is strong in urging us to realise what salvation means in our bodily lives; it means that we command our bodies to obey the new disposition. That is where you find the problems on the margins of the sanctified life. Paul argues in Romans 6:19, "You are perfectly adjusted to God on the inside by a perfect Saviour, but your members have been used as servants of the wrong disposition; now begin to make those same members obey the new disposition." As we go on, we find every place God brings us into is the means of enabling us to realise with growing joy that the life of Christ within is more than a match not only for the enemy on the outside; but for the impaired body that comes between. Paul urges with passionate pleading, that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, and then realise, not presumptuously, but with slow, sure, overwhelming certainty that every command of Christ can be obeyed in our bodily life through the Atonement.

(c) Restricting Remains of Sin

"What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:15-16). A partial realisation on the part of a child of God of the salvation of Jesus Christ is the very thing Satan delights in, because it leaves within that one the remains of the sinful disposition. In regeneration a twofold experience ought to be ours: the introduction into a new kingdom by the incoming of the Holy Spirit and the realisation of forgiveness of sins; and then being borne on to a moral identification with the death of Jesus whereby we know that "our old man is crucified with Him." Impaired lives, impaired judgments and experiences—all that makes us limp and compromising, comes about because we have realised only partially what Jesus Christ came to do, and the great rouser up out of that sleep of indifference is the Apostle Paul. Read his Epistles, rely on the Spirit of God, and let Him drive home these truths to you.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/21 10:32

Freedom for God

I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another. (Isaiah 42:8)

If I call any good thing my own, as if I were it, or of myself had Power or did or knew anything, or as if anything were mine or of me, or belonged to me, or were due to me or the like, I take unto myself somewhat of honour and glory, and do two evil things: First, I fall and go astray as aforesaid; Secondly, I touch God in His honour and take unto myself what belongeth to God only. For all that must be called good belongeth to none but to the true eternal Goodness which is God only, and whoso taketh it unto himself committeth unrighteousness and is against God.

The subtlety of Satan as an angel of light comes just here, and we hear the saints, unwittingly and without any intention of doing it, taking the glory to themselves. To say a thing is the sure way to thinking it. That is why it is so necessary to testify to what Jesus Christ has done for us. A testimony gets hold of the mind as it has hold of the heart; but the same thing is true of the opposite, if we say a wrong thing often enough we begin to think it. The only way to be kept from taking glory to ourselves is to keep steadfastly faced by our Saviour and not by the needs of the people. Di

do you ever notice how God lets you go down when you trust good people? The best of men and women are but the best of men and women, the only good is God, and Jesus Christ always brings the soul face to face with God, and that is the one great thought we have to be soaked with. The spirit of covetousness is a flood, and when the Apostle Paul talked about the Spirit, his idea is of a flood, "Be filled with the Spirit," invaded by the personal passionate Lover of God until we realise there is only one Good, and we have no time or inclination for any other kind of goodness. "In all the world there is none but Thee, my God, there is none but Thee." Are we there?

We will deal treacherously with the Bible records if we are not soaked in the revelation that God only is good. We will put the saints on the throne, not God. There is only one unshakeable goodness, and that is God. It takes time to get there because we will cling to things and to people. Those of us who ought to be princes and princesses with God cling to the shows of God's goodness instead of God Himself. The only influence that is to tell in a servant of God is God. Let people think what they like about you, but be careful that the last thought they get is God. When we have gone from them, there must be no beauty or fascination in us that makes them long for us, the only remembrance left must be, "That woman was true to God," "That man was true to God."

The quotations are from the book entitled Theologia Germanica.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/27 8:25

Chapter III

The Philosophy of the Fall—II

By the Fall man not only died from God, but he fell into disunion with himself; that means it became possible for him to live in one of the three parts of his nature. We want to live a spiritual life, but we forget that that life has to work out in rational expression in our souls; or we want to live a clear life in the soul and forget altogether that we have a body and spirit; or else we want to live the life of a splendid animal and forget altogether the life of the soul and spirit. When a man is born again of the Spirit of God, he is introduced to life with God and union with himself. The one thing essential to the new life is obedience to the Spirit of God Who has energised our spirits; that obedience must be complete in spirit, soul and body. We must not nourish one part of our being apart from the other parts.

Margins of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-24)

The margins of our spirit retain the damage done by the Fall, even after sanctification, and unless we are energised by the Spirit of God and continually draw our life from God, Satan will come in as an angel of light; and deceive us, and the first way he does it is by habits of ecstasy.

(a) Habits of Ecstasy

Habits of ecstasy, that is, the tendency to live a spiritual life before God apart from the rational life of our soul and the physical life of our body. In many a life the idea that creeps in slowly is that we must develop a spiritual life altogether apart from the rational and the physical life. God is never in that type of teaching. There are people we call naturally spiritual people who devote all their time to developing the spirit, forgetting altogether the rational life and the physical life. When we look at them or read about them they seem all right, spiritual and fine, but they lack the one marvellous stamp of the religion of Jesus Christ which keeps spirit, soul and body going on together. God never develops one part of our being at the expense of the other; spirit, soul and body are kept in harmony. Remember, our spirit does not go further than we bring our body. The Spirit of God always drives us out of the visionary, out of the excitable, out of the ecstasy stages, if we are inclined that way. This blind life of the spirit, a life that delights to live in the dim regions of the spirit, refusing to bring the leadings of the Holy Spirit into the rational life, gives occasion to supernatural forces that are not of God. It is impossible to guard our spirit, the only One Who can guard all its entrances is God. Never give way to spiritual ecstasy unless there is a chance of working it out rationally, check it every time. Nights and days of prayer and waiting on God may be a curse to our souls and an occasion for Satan. So always remember that the times we have in communion with God must be worked out in the soul and in the body.

(b) Habits of Election of Days (Galatians 4:8-11)

The habits Paul refers to here are superstitious habits in which the mind fixes on days, and months, and seasons, and years—on certain days God will bless us, on other days He won't; if I am careful about this and that, it will bring me into the presence of God. The days, and months, and seasons, and years are appointed by God, but the Galatians were fixing on them altogether apart from God, and Paul says, "I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain" (rv). Nowadays superstition is growing again, and people are held in bondage to it. Are we in danger of fixing on means other than God for maintaining our spiritual life? Do we put the means of grace in the place of grace itself? If we make devotional habits the source from which we draw our life, God will put us through the discipline of upsetting those times. You say, "God does not upset them in other lives, why should He in mine?" Because you are putting them in the place of God. When you put God first you will easily get your times of communion, because God can entrust them to the soul who does not use them in an irrational way and give occasion to the enemy to enter in. When our spirit is awakened by God we must bring ourselves into subordination to the Spirit of God and not fly off at a tangent, fixing on days and seasons and ritual, thus giving a chance to the mysterious background of our life that we know nothing about but which the Bible reveals, and which Satan is on the watch for all the time.

The only soul Satan cannot touch is the soul whose spiritual life and rational life and physical life is hid with Christ in God; that soul is absolutely secure.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/3/27 23:40

(c) Habits of Enervation by Dreaming (Jude 8)

Ecstasy of spirit leads to external ritual in the rational life, and makes the bodily life spend its time in dreaming. The lassitude that creeps over an unhealthy soul produces the physical madness of hysteria. All animal magnetism, all the power of one person over another, and all the hysterics of self-pity that makes some people absolutely useless unless they are in the presence of certain other people, all spring from this source. It begins in a wrong relationship to God first; a real life with God was started, but instead of drawing the whole life from God and working it out through the body, the bodily life is spent in dreams, in fastings, in prayings, and slowly there develops a madness of the nerves, which is what hysteria really is. Hysteria is a physical morbid craving for sympathy from other people, which can go to such an extent that people cannot live apart from certain other people. There is no power of God in such lives. Hysteria is the actual nervous manifestation of fundamental self-pity, consequently it has been regarded for long by the medical world as a psycho-physical disease; it is more a disposition than a disease. In this domain we get the sympathy cures of Christian Science, i.e. a stronger personality coming in contact with a soul that has got out of touch with God through disobedience can soothe the hysteria of the nerves and inject a cure by its sympathy which has nothing to do with God or with the devil, but entirely to do with the influence of a strong personality over a weak one. Animal magnetism does not come from the devil, but remember that animal magnetism always gives occasion to the devil. In reading the records of French physicians, who used hypnotism in operating in the past more than they do now, case after case is recorded where a good-living physician used hypnotism but always stated his dread and dislike of it, simply because he found that he could never be sure what would happen to the person after the cure had been effected. And to-day we find over and over again that cures are genuine, the disease disappears, but there is a derangement in the life towards God and towards men. In every case of healing by God it comes through a child-like trust in Jesus Christ.

Any man or woman who is inclined to spend their time dreaming when they should be working out actually through the finger-tips what the Spirit of God is working in, is in danger of degenerating into those who in their dreamings defile the flesh. God never allows a Christian to carry on his life in sections—so much time for study and meditation and so much for actual work; the whole life, spirit, soul and body must progress together.

Are you forming habits of ecstasy? Beware. Are you forming habits of ritual? habits of physical dreaming, wanting to get away from the active rush of things? Beware. When we get into the healthy life of God all the margins of spirit and soul and body are merged in a complete oneness with God. ". . . that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

(d) Habits of Envy (Proverbs 27:4)

Spiritual envy starts from having got something from God in the way of quickening and then trying to use it in our way, n

of God's. Spiritual envy is a terrible evil of the soul, and will always follow the tendency to develop a spiritual life apart from the rational life and the bodily life. All kinds of sour distempers will be ours spiritually, we shall be envious of people who are growing in their life with God in ways we are not, and we will have almost diabolical suggestions about them, suggestions we would never have got through our own unaided spirit. Spiritual envy is an awful possibility to any soul who does not obey the Spirit of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4).

(e) Habits of Emotions of Dread (Colossians 2:18)

If we separate the life of the spirit from the rational life, we experience emotions of dread, forebodings and spiritual night mares in the soul, which are not imaginary but real. The cause is not always to be found in the physical condition, but in the margins of our spirit life. Remember that through the Fall man fell into dis-union, spirit, soul and body were separated from one another, that means we are liable to influences from God or from the devil. It is only when we get full of dread about life apart from God that we leave ourselves in His hands. Immediately we try to live a spiritual life with God and forget our soul and body, the devil pays attention to our body, and when we pay attention to our body he begins to get at our spirit, until we learn there is only one way to keep right—to live the life hid with Christ in God; the life and power of God garrisons all three domains, spirit, soul and body, but it depends on us whether we allow God to do it. God cannot garrison us if we try to live a spiritual life on a life of our own, or if we go off on emotions in our rational life. God never garrisons us in bits. Whenever marriages come to our lives it is because we have got twisted off somewhere, we are not living in simple, full, child-like union with God, handing the keeping of our lives over to Him and being carefully careless about everything saving our relationship to Him; keep that right, and He will guard every avenue. "Kept by the power of God;"

(f) Habits of Exceptional "Drugging" (Jude 12-13)

There are hidden perils in our life with God whenever we disobey Him. If we are not obeying God physically we experience a craving for drugs, not only physical drugs out of a bottle, but drugs in certain types of meetings and certain types of company—anything that keeps away the realisation that the habits of the bodily life are not in accordance with what is God's will. If in the providence of God, obedience to God takes me into contact with people and surroundings that are wrong and bad, I may be perfectly certain that God will guard me; but if I go there out of curiosity, God does not guard me, and the tendency is to "drug" it over—"I went with a good idea to try and find out about these things." Well, you plainly had no business to go, and you know you had no business to go because the Spirit of God is absolutely honest. The whole thing starts from disobedience on a little point. We wanted to utilise God's grace for our own purposes, to use God's gifts for our own reasoning out of things in a particular way.

Chambers, O.

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/2 0:05

(g) Habits of Enmity (Romans 8:7)

The carnal mind is a dangerous power alongside the Spirit of God in our personality before identification with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection is reached. When a man has received the Holy Spirit, the watching of Satan is keen, his whole desire is to split up the personality. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17; rv). The carnal mind is enmity against God, and it is the carnal mind which connects us with the body of sin, of which Satan is the head, and of which there is ultimately to be a new manifestation (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3). Every soul who enters into the experience of entire sanctification limits the body of sin, consequently the great yearning eagerness of the preaching of the Gospel is to get God's children to the place of sanctification where spirit, soul and body are one, one personality absolutely ruled by God, where the life of the spirit is instantly manifested in the life of the soul and body (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). If this place of entire sanctification is not reached, there is always that in us which has a strong affinity with the devil, and this is the remarkable thing, we never knew it before we were introduced into the kingdom of God by the initial experience of regeneration; but we find after a while the strong lustful hate of something in us against what the Spirit God has put in, and the lust is for one thing—I want to dominate this personality.

(h) Habits of Earnest Devotions (Colossians 2:20-23)

Have we any helps to keep us living a godly life? That is the risk. Slowly and surely God will purify our lives from props that separate us from Him. Immediately the means of grace are taken to be grace itself, they become a direct hindrance to

o our life with God. The means are simply scaffolding for the time being, and as long as they are in their right place they are an assistance, immediately we put them as the source, we give occasion to the enemy. Have we helped ourselves in work for God from any other source than God? "Ye are complete in Him" (Colossians 2:10).

(i) Habits of Extraordinary Defying (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

A spiritual man or woman going astray can use the extraordinary powers awakened by the Spirit of God against God. The only safeguard, and it is an absolute safeguard, is to live the life hid with Christ in God. The life that steadily refuses to think from its right to itself, that steadily refuses to trust its own insight, is the only life that Satan cannot touch. Watch every time you get to a tight feeling spiritually, to a dry feeling rationally, to a hindered feeling physically, it is the Spirit of God's quiet warning that you should repair to the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There is never any fear for the life that is hid with Christ in God, but there is not only fear, but terrible danger, for the life unguarded by God. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High"—once there, and although God's providence should take you into hell itself, you are as safe and secure as Almighty God can keep you.

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/3 20:01

Chapter IV

The Philosophy of Discernment

A philosopher is a lover of wisdom, and spiritual philosophy means the love of wisdom not only in our heart life, but in our heads—the last place a Christian gets to. Usually we leave our heads barren, we simply use our brains to explain our heart's experience. That is necessary, but we have to let our brains be guided by the Holy Spirit into thinking a great many things we have not experienced. That is, we are committed to Jesus Christ's view of everything, and if we only allow our brains to dwell on what we have experienced, we shut ourselves off from a great deal we ought to be exercised in. Our heart experience always outstrips our head statement, and when the experience begins to be stated explicitly, our heart witnesses to it—"Why I know that, but I never realised before how it worked." Discernment is the power to interpret what we see and hear.

The Path of Discernment

For without Me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

... man's knowledge should be so clear and perfect that he should acknowledge of a truth (that in himself he neither hath nor can do any good thing, and that none of his knowledge, wisdom and art, his will, love and good works do come from himself, nor are of man, nor of any creature, but) that all these are of the eternal God from whom they all proceed.

Have I learned to think what the testimony of my heart makes me state? We all say this kind of thing—"I know that in me . . . dwelleth no good thing," but do we think it? Do we really think what Jesus has taught us to know in our hearts, that apart from Him we can do nothing? We all believe it, but do we think it? Over and over again God has to take us into desert places spiritually where there is no conscious experience at all. We have probably all had this in our experience—we have had a grand time of living communion with God, we know we are sanctified, the witness of the Spirit has proved it over and over again, then all of a sudden there falls a dearth, no life, no quickness; there is no degeneration, no backsliding, but an absolute dearth. This may be the reason—the Lord is wanting to take us to a desert place apart; that we may get to this path of discernment. All the noisy things that fret our lives when we are spiritual come because we have not discerned what we know in our hearts.

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/8 0:56

(a) The Discipline of Negatives (﻿1 Corinthians 4:7﻿)

Paul is talking about natural gifts as well as spiritual. ﻿Â﻿What hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?﻿Â﻿(rv). Have we learned to think when we see someone endowed with natural gifts, such as a fine voice, or a good brain, or any of the gifts of genius, that every one of those gifts has been received, therefore they cannot be consecrated? You cannot consecrate what is not yours. In thinking we do not really go along the scriptural lines our hearts go on. Watch your heart in relationship to God, you recognise that you cannot consecrate yourself to God: you give yourself to God, and yet in thinking we go along the line of consecrating our gifts to God. We have to get rid altogether of the idea that our gifts are ours, they are not, gifts are gifts, and we have to be so given over to God that we never think of our gifts, then God can let His own life flow through us. The discipline of negatives is the hardest discipline in the spiritual life, and if you are going through it you ought to shout ﻿Hallelujah,﻿Â﻿ for it is a sign that God is getting your mind and heart where the mind and heart of Jesus Christ was.

Spiritual gifts must be dealt with in the same way as natural gifts. Spiritual gifts are not glorified gifts, they are the gift of the Spirit. ﻿Â﻿Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.﻿Â﻿None of the gifts Paul mentions in ﻿1 Corinthians 12:8-11﻿ are natural gifts. The danger is to say, ﻿How highly favoured I must be if God gives me this great gift﻿Â﻿ ﻿what a wonderful person I must be.﻿Â﻿ We never talk like that, but the slightest thought that looks upon the gifts of the Spirit as a favour to us is the first thing that will take us out of the central point of Jesus Christ's teaching. Never look at the work of God in and through you; never look at the way God uses you in His service; immediately you do, you put your mind away from where Jesus Christ wants to get it. Gifts are gifts, not graces.

(b) The Development of Nobility (﻿2 Corinthians 3:5-6﻿)

Paul is calling his own mind to a halt in order to explain to the Corinthian Church why what he says and does comes with authority. ﻿Â﻿Our sufficiency is from God; Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant﻿Â﻿(rv). If you are right with God, you will be amazed at what other people get in the way of real spiritual help out of what you say; but never think about it. The temptation comes all along to say, ﻿It is because I brooded that God gave me that thought.﻿Â﻿ The right attitude is to keep the mind absolutely concentrated on God and never get off on the line of how you are being used by Him. Even in the choicest of saints there is the danger. Whenever you feel inclined to say, ﻿Well, of course that was not me, that was God,﻿Â﻿ beware! you ought never to be in the place where you can think it. The teaching of Jesus is, ﻿Be absorbed with Me, and out of you will flow rivers of living water﻿Â﻿ If we are paying attention to the Source, rivers of living water will pour out of us, but immediately we stop paying attention to the Source, the outflow begins to dry up. We have nothing to do with our ﻿usability,﻿Â﻿ but only with our relationship to Jesus Christ, nothing must be allowed to come in between.

Have we allowed this path of discernment to be trodden by our feet? Are we beginning to see where we are being led, viz. to the place where we are ﻿rooted and grounded in God﻿,﻿? The one essential thing is to live the life ﻿hid with Christ in God.﻿

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/9 10:44

The Pain of Deliverance

And Jesus called a little child unto Him . . . and said, . . . Except ye . . . become as little children . . . (﻿Matthew 18:2-3﻿)

For when the﻿vain imagination﻿,﻿ and ignorance are turned into an understanding and knowledge of the truth, the claiming of anything for our own will cease of itself.

A healthy man does not know what health is: a sick man knows what health is, because he has lost it; and a saint rightly related to God does not know what the will of God is because he is the will of God. A disobedient soul knows what the will of God is because he has disobeyed. The illustration Jesus gives to His disciples of a saintly life is a little child. Jesus d

id not put up a child as an ideal, but to show them that ambition has no place whatever in the disposition of a Christian. The life of a child is unconscious in its fullness of life, and the source of its life is implicit love. To be made children over again causes pain because we have to reconstruct our mental ways of looking at things after God has dealt with our heart experience. Some of us retain our old ways of looking at things, and the deliverance is painful. Paul urges that we allow the pain—“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”; bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It is hard to do it. In the beginning we are so anxious—“Lord, give me a message for this meeting,” until we learn that if we live in the centre of God’s will, He will give us messages when He likes and withhold them when He likes. We try to help God help Himself to us; we have to get out of the way and God will help Himself to our lives in every detail. Have we learned to form the mind of Christ by the pain of deliverance till we know we are drawing on Him for everything? Are we sacrificing our holy selves to the will of Jesus as He did to the will of His Father? Are we beginning to speak what God wants us to speak because we are submitting our intelligence to Him? The Son can do nothing of Himself. Our Lord never allowed such a thought as, “I have done that,” in His mind. Have we spiritual discernment like that? If not, remember what the Apostle James says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

(a) The Plunge into God (1 Corinthians 13:8-10)

Now when a man duly perceiveth these things in himself he and the creature fall behind, and he doth not call anything his own, and the less he taketh this knowledge unto himself the more perfect doth it become. So also is it with the will and love, and desire, and the like. For the less we call these things our own, the more perfect and noble and Godlike do they become, and the more we think them our own, the baser and less pure and perfect do they become.

The only way to learn to swim is to take the plunge, sink or swim; that is exactly the idea here. Will I cut loose from all moorings and plunge straight into God? It is what the New Testament is continually urging—“Let go.” Life goes on in a series of coveting the best gifts, but, Paul says, “a still more excellent way shew I unto you”; (rv) “take an absolute plunge into the love of God, and when you are there you will be amazed at your foolishness for not getting there before. It is not the question of the surrender of a soul for sanctification, but the unreserved surrender of a sanctified soul to God. We are so reserved where we ought to be unreserved, and so unreserved where we ought to be reserved. We ought never to be reserved towards God but utterly open, perfectly one with Him all through. After the experience of sanctification we have to present our sanctified self to God, and one of the greatest difficulties in doing this is considering the conditions other people say we have to observe. They themselves, . . . comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding”; (rv). Watch how tied up we are with other people’s notions of what we should be. The only way to get rid of it all is to take the plunge into the love of God. We have to form the mind of Christ until we are absorbed in Him and take no account of the evil done to us. No love on earth can do this but the love of God.

(b) The Participation in Godliness (Philippians 3:7-8)

We must cast all things from us, and strip ourselves of them; we must refrain from claiming anything for our own.

“ . . . for Whom I suffered the loss of all things”; (rv). To experience the loss of all things for anyone but Jesus Christ is mental suicide. Read what Our Lord said to the rich young ruler “Sell whatsoever thou hast, . . . and come, follow Me”; “Reduce yourself until you are a mere conscious man, and then give that manhood to Me”; and we read that “his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions”; (rv). Do you possess a reputation as a Christian worker? That will be in the way when the Lord speaks to you. Are you rich in the consciousness that you are somebody spiritually? That will be in the way. You must first estimate and then experience the loss of all things and cast yourself on Jesus, then participation in godliness will be yours as it never has been.

When we do this, we shall have the best, fullest, clearest and noblest knowledge that a man can have, and also the noblest and purest love, will and desire; for then these will be all of God alone. It is much better that they should be God’s than the creature’s.

The oneness Jesus Christ prayed for in John 17 is the oneness of identity, not of union. “I and My Father are one,” and by the Atonement our Lord brings us into identity with Him

elf—﻿Â“﻿that they may be one, even as We are one.﻿Â”﻿

Oswald Chambers

Re: Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/4/9 16:49

Quote:

-----a saint rightly related to God does not know what the will of God is because he is the will of God....Watch how tied up we are with other people's notions of what we should be. The only way to get rid of it all is to take this plunge into the love of God...Read what Our Lord said to ﻿the rich young ruler﻿: Â—﻿Â” ﻿Â”﻿Sell whatsoever thou hast, . . . and come, follow Me...do you possess a reputation as a Christian worker? That will be in the way when the Lord speaks to you. Are you rich in the consciousness that you are somebody spiritually?

Oswald certainly knew how to turn our eyes from our love for Jesus so that our attention could remain fixed on Jesus himself.

MC

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/10 21:23

(Indeed, it's been hard not to race ahead here, am up ahead of the postings a bit and it just keeps getting better...)

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### **The Plane of Delight (&#65279;2 Corinthians 4:16-18&#65279;)**

*While we look . . . at the things which are not seen. (&#65279;2 Corinthians 4:18&#65279;)*

*But if our inward man were to make a leap and spring into the Perfect, we should find and taste how that the Perfect is without measure, number or end, better and nobler than all which is imperfect and&#65279;in part&#65279;, and the Eternal above the temporal or perishable, and the foundation and source above all that floweth or can ever flow from it.*

When we think of being delivered from sin, of being &#65279;filled with the Spirit&#65279;, we say, Â“&#65279;Oh, I shall never get there, it is only for exceptional people like the Apostle Paul&#65279;Â”; but when by God's grace we get there we find it is the easiest place to live; it is not a mountain-peak, but a flat tableland of delight with plenty of room for everyone. &#65279;Â“&#65279;And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless&#65279;Â” &#65279;Â—that is not the life we are to live hereafter, but the life God would have us live now; most of us are far too diffident about getting there.

### **(a) The Altitude of Love**

*. . . the greatest of these is love. (&#65279;1 Corinthians 13:13&#65279; rv)*

*A Master called Baitius said, Â“&#65279;It is of sin that we do not love that which is Best.&#65279;Â” He hath spoken the truth. That which is best should be the dearest of all things to us.*

Is it? Sometimes we crave for something less than the best, beware! We ought to love the most what is best. The spirit of God in us can teach us how to love the best, through faith, through knowledge, through everything till we are altogether in love with God, in absolute harmony with Him, absorbed in the one great purpose of God.

*And in our love of it, neither helpfulness nor unhelpfulness, advantage nor injury, gain nor loss, honour nor dishonour, praise nor blame, nor anything of the kind should be regarded.*

&#65279;1 Corinthians 13&#65279; is not an ideal, it is an identification which makes the ideal possible. Never put the ideal where the Spirit of God does not put it. The ideal comes after the identification.



## (b) The Atmosphere of Life

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love. . . .* (&#5279;Galatians 5:22&#5279;&#5279;&#5279;)

*Now that creature in which the Eternal Good, most manifesteth itself shineth forth, worketh, is most known and loved, is the best, and that wherein the Eternal Good is least manifested is the least good of all creatures.*

In days gone by we all used to love the creatures that exhibit reflections of the Eternal Good—honour and courage and strength, but when we are made one with Jesus Christ we find we love the creatures that exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. A great alteration has come over our outlook; God is altering the thing that matters.

*Therefore when we have to do with the creatures and hold converse with them, and take note of their diverse qualities, the best creatures must always be the dearest to us, and we must cleave to them, and unite ourselves to them.*

&#5279;Â“&#5279;What communion hath light with darkness?&#5279;Â“&#5279; The education God puts His children through in life is, &#5279;Â“&#5279;first that which is natural; then that which is spiritual,&#5279;Â“&#5279; until we are &#5279;rooted and grounded in Him&#5279;&#5279;&#5279;, then there is no danger evermore to that life. It is always better further on—through the natural to the spiritual. No wonder the counsel of the Spirit through the writer to the Hebrews is &#5279;Â“&#5279;Ye have need of patience.&#5279;Â“&#5279;

*(The quotations are from the book entitled Theologia Germanica.)*

Oswald Chambers

**Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/12 22:42**

## Chapter V

### The Philosophy of Following Our Lord

*First, man must consider the teaching and the life of Jesus Christ, for He hath taught poverty and lived it. And a man should follow the teaching and the life, if he wisheth to be perfect, for He saith, &#5279;Â“&#5279;Whoso loveth Me keepeth My commandments and My counsels, and heareth My word."*

&#5279;

In every profession under heaven the great ambition of the natural heart is to be perfect. When Jesus Christ was faced with a splendid specimen of a young man, He said, &#5279;Â“&#5279;If you would be perfect&#5279;, I will tell you what to do.&#5279;Â“

&#5279;

Â“&#5279;If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.&#5279;Â“&#5279; The whole outcome of following Jesus is expressed for us in these words, viz. that the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will come and make Their abode with the man who loves Jesus and keeps His word. As long as the devil can keep us terrified of thinking, he will always limit the work of God in our souls.

### The Way of the Follower Negative

*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (&#5279;Luke 9:23)*

The word Â“&#5279;deny&#5279;Â“ embraces what the Apostle Paul meant when he said Â“&#5279;mortify therefore,&#5279;Â“ or, make dead, Â“&#5279;your members which are upon the earth&#5279;Â“ (&#5279;Colossians 3:5&#5279;).

### (a) Infirmary-Sins

*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (&#5279;Romans 8:13&#5279;)*

It might now be said, What is man in his selfhood, that he must deny, if he wisheth to follow after Christ? Man's selfhood consisteth in four things. First, his frailty, and that he falleth into sins; and this he must needs set aside; he must die to his defects and sins, and mortify himself.

The disposition in us is either implanted naturally through the first Adam, or implanted supernaturally through the last Adam; by regeneration and sanctification. We breed our temperament out of the disposition that is in us. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must do to death infirmity-sins. God cannot do it, we have to do it ourselves. Satan takes occasion of the frailty of the bodily temple and says, "Now you know you cannot do that, you are so infirm, you cannot concentrate your mind," etc. Never allow bodily infirmities to hinder you obeying the commands of Jesus. Paul says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage" (rv). Through the Atonement God deals with the wrong disposition in us, then He gives us the glorious privilege of making our bodies "instruments of righteousness unto God."

#### (b) Inordinate Affection

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; . . . inordinate affection. . . .* (Colossians 3:5)

*Secondly, he is inclined to creatures. For man is inclined by nature to his like, and he must kill nature, and must withdraw from creatures, for God and creatures are opposites. And therefore he who wisheth to have God must leave creatures. For the soul is so narrow that God and the creature cannot dwell together in her; and therefore if God is to dwell in thy soul, the creature must remain without.*

In Colossians 3:5; Paul is describing an unsanctified man, but the same man sanctified is inclined to creatures rather than to the Creator. Watch the hard things Jesus says about father, mother, wife, children, our own life (see Luke 14:26); He says if we are going to follow Him, these must be on the outside of the central citadel. The central citadel must be God and God alone. When once we are willing to "do to death" our clinging to creatures, which in certain supreme calls comes between ourselves and God, Jesus says we will receive an hundredfold; because immediately we are rightly related to God He can trust us with creature relationships without fear of inordinateness. With the majority of us these relationships are cut off, not by our own doing, God has to do it for us; He has to come with strange providences and cut them off, because we have professed that we are going to follow Jesus. We forget that sanctification is only the beginning; the one purpose of sanctification is that Jesus might be "marvelled at in all them that believed."

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/15 10:01

#### (c) Inveterate Luxury

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* (1 Corinthians 9:27)

*The third point is, that man to part from selfhood should drop all sensual delight, for he must die to this and kill it in himself if he wisheth to have God's comfort. As St. Bernard saith, "The comfort of God is so noble that no one receives it who seeketh comfort elsewhere."*

The natural life in a sanctified man or woman is neither moral nor immoral, it is the gift God has given the saint to sacrifice on the altar of love to God. Jesus Christ had a natural body, it was not a sin for Him to be hungry, but it would have been a sin for Him to satisfy that hunger when God had told Him not to, and Satan came to Him when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was an hungred, and said, "Satisfy that hunger now." "The body we have is not sinful in itself; if it were, it would be untrue to say that Jesus Christ was sinless. Paul's words have reference to the fact that our body has been ruled by a sinful disposition, a disposition which simply means I am going to find my sustaining in creature comforts. After we are sanctified we have the same body, but it is ruled by a new disposition, and we have to sacrifice our natural life to God even as Jesus did, so that we make the natural life spiritual by a series of direct moral choices.

#### (d) Intellectual Intemperance

*And lest I should be exalted above measure . . . through the abundance of the revelations . . .* (2 Corinthians 12:7)

*The fourth thing a man must let go if he wisheth to follow Christ, is spiritual natural comforts, which are generated in man, by detecting the distinction between spiritual and natural knowledge. . . . Whoever tarries by this natural rational delight, hinders himself from the supernatural delight which God in His grace imparteth to the soul.*

Intellectual intemperance is a great snare to a saint. Bodily fasting is child's play compared to the determined fasting from the intellectual apprehension of the teachings of Jesus that goes beyond what we are living out. The characteristic of many spiritual people to-day is intellectual intemperance, fanatical intoxication with the things of God, wild exuberance, an unlikeness to the sanity of Jesus in the very ways of God. There is a danger in the enjoyment of the delights and the power that come to us through Jesus Christ's salvation without lifting the life into keeping with His teaching, especially in spiritual people whose minds have never been disciplined and they wander off into all kinds of vagaries. That accounts for the distinction we find between spiritual sincerity and spiritual reality.

All this is the negative side of following our Lord. Have we told Jesus we will follow Him? Are we prepared to do our part in keeping under the body for one purpose only, that we may learn the fellowship of following? Are we beginning to realise that until we are born again the teachings of Jesus are simple; after we are born again they become growingly difficult, and we find clouds and darkness are round about the things we thought we knew perfectly well once, and following our Lord is one of these things?

Oswald Chambers

**Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/17 11:02**

### **The Way of the Fellowship Positive**

*And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:38-39)*

It is possible to be grossly selfish in absorbing the salvation of Jesus, to enjoy all its benedictions, and never follow Him one step. So Jesus says, "If any man would follow Me, this is the way— he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

#### **(a) Working Virtue from God**

*. . . for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (Romans 6:19)*

*First, man should kill sin in himself through virtue; for just as man is removed from God by sin must he be brought nigh again unto God by virtue . . . but let no one believe that he is free from sins, unless he hath taken unto himself all the virtues.*

The positive side is this—that we work all the virtues of Jesus in and through our members, but this can only be done when all self-reliance has come to an end (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:9). Our natural virtues are remnants of what God created man to be, not promises of what he is going to be. The natural virtues cannot be patched up to come anywhere near God's demands, and the sign that God is at work in us is that He corrupts our confidence in the natural virtues. It is simply an amplification of the old Gospel hymn—

*Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling!*

#### **(b) Willing Poverty for God**

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)*

*The second thing that man must shun is the love for creatures. Poverty of spirit is a going out of your self and out of everything earthly. Thereby he despiseth creatures, is despised by them, and is thus set free. A truly poor man taketh nothing from creatures, but all from God, be it bodily or spiritual. God alone will be the Giver.*

To be willingly poor for God is to strip myself of all things for the sake of Jesus Christ. One of the greatest snares is built

on what is really a great truth, viz. that every man has Christ in himself. The pernicious use that is made of that statement is that therefore man draws power from himself. Never! Jesus Christ never drew power from Himself: He drew it always from without Himself, viz. from His Father. "The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5:19; see John 5:30). Beware of being rich spiritually on earth, only be rich spiritually in heaven. Jesus said to the rich young ruler; "If you will strip yourself and have no riches here, you will lay up for yourself treasure in heaven. Treasure in heaven is faith that has been tried (cf. Revelation 3:18). Immediately we begin to have fellowship with Jesus we have to live the life of faith at all costs; it may be bitter to begin with, but afterwards it is ineffably and indescribably sweet—willing poverty for God, a determined going outside myself and every earthly thing.

Oswald Chambers

**Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/4/24 16:48**

### **(c) Watchful Purity for God**

*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)*

*But who knoweth, wilt thou ask, if he have all virtues? I answer to this like John, who saith, "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin." For in the same moment in which God the Father begetteth His Son in the soul, sins and all unlikeness disappear, and all virtues are born in her in a likeness to God.*

According to that statement of the Apostle John no one is free from sin unless he is possessed of all the virtues. The Apostle is not teaching sinless perfection; he is teaching perfect sinlessness, which is a different matter. If as sanctified souls we walk in the light, as God is in the light, the revelation is that through the Atonement "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." That does not mean cleansing from all sin in our consciousness; if it did, it would produce hypocrisy. Any number of people are not conscious of sin, but it does not follow that they are cleansed from all sin. It is not our consciousness that is referred to, but the consciousness God has of us; what we are conscious of is walking in the light with nothing to hide. The outcome of following our Lord is a holiness of character so that God sees nothing to censure; "because the life of His Son is working out in every particular. Our main idea is to keep steadfastly in the blazing light of God so that He can exhibit the virtues of Jesus through us unhindered. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments" (rv). How many of them? All of them. Then, says Jesus, "We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him"—in heaven? No, here.

### **(d) Wonderful Passion for God**

*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2)*

*. . . and whoso would eat its fruit (the fruit of the holy cross) with profit must break it off from the cross by steadfast internal contemplation of the Passion of Our Lord.*

*All on the cross is full of fruit, and more than all tongues could in truth proclaim. Nay, angels' tongues could not describe the overflowing grace that is there hidden in the Passion of our Lord. Blessed are those who have found this treasure.*

Steady contemplation of the Passion of our Lord will "do to death" everything that is not of God. It is only after a long while of going on with God and steady contemplation of the Cross that we begin to understand its meaning. "To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" is said at only one place, viz. at the Cross.

This is not a message about our salvation and sanctification, but about the outcome of salvation and sanctification in our implicit life, i.e. where we live it and cannot speak it. Jesus said, "If any man would be My disciple . . . not, "If any man would be saved and sanctified." "If any man will be My disciple—those are the conditions." Jesus Christ always talked about discipleship with an "If."



We are at perfect liberty to toss our spiritual head and say, "No, thank you, that is a bit too stern for me," and the Lord will never say a word, we can do exactly what we like. He will never plead, but the opportunity is there, "If . . ."

After all, it is the great stern call of Jesus that fascinates men and women quicker than anything. It is not the gospel of being saved from hell and enjoying heaven that attracts men, saving in a very shallow mood; it is Christ crucified that attracts men; Jesus said so—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Jesus Christ never attracts us by the unspeakable bliss of Paradise; He attracts us by an ugly beam. We talk about getting down to the depths of a man's soul: Jesus Christ is the only One Who ever did. If once a man has heard the appeal of Jesus from the Cross, he begins to find there is something there that answers the cry of the human heart and the problem of the whole world. What we have to do as God's servants is to lift up Christ crucified. We can either do it as gramophones, or as those who are in fellowship with Him.

Many of us have heard Jesus Christ's first "Follow Me"—to a life of liberty and joy and gladness; how many of us have heard the second "Follow Me"—"deny your right to yourself and do to death" in yourself everything that never was in Me?"

*The quotations are from the book entitled The Following of Christ, by John Tauler.*

Oswald Chambers

**Re: Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/5/1 16:12**

## **Chapter VI**

### **The Philosophy of Godliness**

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.* John 14:12

### **The Way of the Working of God**

*Then said they unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent.* (John 6:28-29)

*There are two kinds of work in God—a working within and a working outwardly. The working inward is God's being and nature, the outward working is the creature. . . . God worketh in souls that He may bring them to the first origin from which they have flowed, for by their works they cannot go in again.*

These words of Jesus sum up the whole mystery of the work of grace, viz. that to work the works of God we must stop working and let God work. "This is the work of God, that ye believe. . . . Un-belief is the most active thing on earth; it is negative on God's side, not on ours. Un-belief is a fretful, worrying, questioning, annoying, self-centred spirit. To believe is to stop all this and let God work.

#### **(a) The Working Master**

*. . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.* (Philippians 2:12-13)

*If man is to come to God, he must be empty of all work and let God work alone. . . . Now, all that God willeth to have from us is that we be inactive, and let Him be the working Master.*

Paul does not say, Work out something that will tell for your salvation; he says, Work out in the expression of your life the salvation God has worked in. If we think for a moment we shall soon know how much we are saved—What does our tongue say? what kind of things do our ears like to listen to? what kind of bodily associates do we like to be with? These things will always tell not only other people but ourselves what kind of salvation God has worked in. In regeneration God works us into relation with Himself that by our bodily expression we may prove Whose we are. If you are trying to be a Christian it is a sure sign you are not one. Fancy trying to be the daughter of your mother! you cannot help being her daughter. But try and be the daughter of someone else's mother! Unless God has worked in us we shall hinder Him all the time.

me by trying to be His children; we cannot, we have to be born from above; (renewed) by the will of God first, be regenerated; then our working is not working to help God, it is working to let God express through us what He has done in us so that we may prove we are the children of our Father in heaven (see Matthew 5:43-48;).

So many of us put prayer and work and consecration in place of the working of God; we make ourselves the workers. God is the Worker, we work out what He works in. Spirituality is what God is after, not religiosity. The great snare in religion without genuine spirituality is that people are being good when they are absolutely mean. There is no value whatever in religious externals, the only thing that is of value is spiritual reality, and this is spiritual reality—that I allow God to work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, and then work out what He has worked in, being carefully careless about everything saving my relationship to God.

Chambers, O.

**Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/5/2 23:45**

**(b) The Workable Medium**

*If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. (John 15:6;)*

*If we were altogether inactive we should be perfect men. For all that is good is the work of God, and if God does not work it, it is not good.*

I wonder how many of us are living on the virtues of our grandparents! The natural virtues are remnants of what the original creation of man once was, they are not promises of what man is going to be; what man is going to be is seen in the life of Jesus Christ. The workable medium is man. God takes as the medium of working the stuff we are made of, and all He requires is for us to be inactive and let Him work. When once we are rightly related to God through the Atonement we will be inactive and not in the way of His working in us as He worked in Jesus; consequently we shall be able to work out in our natural life all that God wills. It is the old twist, we will try to do what God alone can do, and then we mourn before God because He won't do what we alone can do. We put up sighing petitions—"I have tried to be good"; "I have tried to sanctify myself." All that is the work of God, and the best thing to do is to stop trying and let God do it. What we have to do, and what God cannot do, is to work out what He has worked in. We try to do God's work for Him, and God has to wait until we are passive enough to let Him work in us. To believe in Jesus means retiring and letting God take the mastership inside. That is all God asks of us. Have we ever got into the way of letting God work, or are we so amazingly important that we really wonder in our nerves and ways what the Almighty does before we are up in the morning! We are so certain we know what is right, and if we don't always keep at it God cannot get on. Compare that view with the grand, marvellous working of God in the life of the Lord Jesus. Our Lord did not work for God; He said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." Have we any faith in God at all? Do we really expect God to work in us the good pleasure of His will, or do we expect He will only do it as we pray and plead and sacrifice? All these things shut the door to God working. What we have to ask away from, to knock at, to seek through, are these pressing strivings of our own—

*When we stay our feeble efforts, And from struggling cease, Unconditional surrender Brings us God's own peace.*

—a doctrine easily travestied, but a doctrine God never safeguards. The whole basis of modern Christian work is the great impulsive desire to evade concentration on God. We will work for Him any day rather than let Him work in us. When a man or woman realises what God does work in them through Jesus Christ, they become almost lunatic with joy in the eyes of the world. It is this truth we are trying to state, viz. the realisation of the wonderful salvation of God.

**(c) The Worker's Manner**

*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Corinthians 13:13;)*

*How is a man to know if his work is of himself or from God? Shortly be it said; there are three supernatural divine virtues, Faith, Hope, and Love or Charity; whatever increaseth virtues is from God, but what diminisheth them is a sign that it is the work of man. . . . For what man worketh of himself, he applieth to himself and to time . . . but what God worketh, draweth a man away from himself to eternity, and this increaseth Faith, Hope, and Charity.*

How much of faith, hope, and love is worked in us when we try to convince somebody else? It is not our business to convince other people, that is the insistence of a merely intellectual, unspiritual life. The Spirit of God will do the convicting when we are in the relationship where we simply convey God's word. We exploit the word of God in order to fit it into some view of our own that we have generated; but when it comes to the great calm peace and rest of the Lord Jesus, we can easily test where we are. To "rest in the Lord" is the perfection of inward activity. In the ordinary reasoning of man it means sitting with folded arms and letting God do everything; in reality it is being so absolutely stayed on God that we are free to do the active work of men without fuss. The times God works most wonderfully are the times we never think about it. When we work of ourselves we always connect things with time. "What is the good of faith, hope and love when I have to earn my living?" Compare that outlook with what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." It means on our part a continual carelessness about everything but that one thing. The great curse of modern Christianity is that people will not be careless about things they have no right to be careful about, and they will not let God make them careful about their relationship to Him. Sum it up for yourself—what do you think about most, not on the surface, but in the deep centre of your centre? What is the real basal thought of your life—what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; . . . what ye shall put on? None of us are so stupid or lacking in cunning as to say we do think of these things: but if we think of what will happen to all these things if we put God first, we know where we are, God is not first. If He is first you know you can never think of anything He will forget.

Chambers, O.

**Oswald Chambers ~ If Thou Wilt Be Perfect . . . - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/5/18 22:47**

### **The Way of the Working of the Godly**

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; . . . and all things are of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*

*What is the divine work? It is twofold, what God worketh in the soul, one the work of grace, the other essential and divine. By the work of grace man is prepared for the essential . . . by grace God maketh man well-pleasing, it driveth him away from all defective things on to virtue, so that with it he obtaineth all virtues.*

The only sign that we are new creations (renewing) in Christ Jesus is that we know all things are of God. When we are in difficult circumstances, when we are hard up, when friends slander us, to whom do we go? If we know that all things are of God; then we certainly are new creations in Christ Jesus. The things that upset the external life reveal where we live. If we are in Christ the whole basis of our goings is God, not conceptions of God, not ideas of God, but God Himself. We do not need any more ideas about God, the world is full of ideas about God, they are all worthless, because the ideas of God in anyone's head are of no more use than our own ideas. What we need is a real God, not more ideas about Him. Immediately we get a real God we find that old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new; we are so absolutely one with God that we never think of saying we are, the whole life is hid with Christ in God.

### **(a) The Experimental Virtue**

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)*

*God worketh through His grace in man, when He draweth him away from sin and leadeth him on to virtue, if man leaveth sin and exerciseth virtue, this is a grace of God.*

When we are first born again of the Spirit; and become rightly related to God, the whole set of our life is along God's line, other people looking at us know how marvellously God has transformed us; we do things and wonder why we do them. That is experimental virtue, but it is accidental, that is, the expression in our life is that of spiritual innocence not of spiritual holiness yet; then slowly and surely the Holy Spirit leads on to the next thing—the essence of virtue.

### **(b) The Essence of Virtue**

*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. (Galatians 4:19)*

*The second work that God worketh in the soul is essential; when man cometh to this that he hath obtained all accidental virtue, and so now arriveth at the essence of virtue, then God worketh all virtue in him in an essential way, namely, the Heavenly Father begetteth His Son in the soul, and this birth raiseth the spirit above all created things into God.*

“Until Christ—*not Jesus Christ, but Christ, the Son of God, Who was Incarnate once as a Man called Jesus Christ*—until Christ be formed in you.” No wonder Paul talks about “the riches of the glory of this mystery; . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” This is not an innocent state, it is a holy state, the very essence of the life is holy, and as we draw on His resurrection life, the life of Jesus is manifested in our mortal flesh.

### (c) The Essential Vision

*But God . . . hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4, 6)*

Nevertheless grace leaveth not the man, but it directeth and ordereth the forces of man and cherisheth the divine birth in the essence of the soul; . . . the spirit of man hath now passed over to the Godhead.

Being seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus does not mean lolling about on the mount of transfiguration, singing ecstatic hymns, and letting demon-possessed boys go to the devil in the valley; it means being in the accursed places of this earth as far as the walk of the feet is concerned, but in undisturbed communion with God.

In the historic Jesus Christ the spirit of man passed over to the Godhead and Jesus saw essentially, not experimentally, and the same thing happens when Christ is formed in us. God’s grace does not leave a man after an experience of grace. The common idea of how to live the right life seems to be that it is by getting continual “bouts” of God’s grace, that an insight into God’s grace will last us several days. As a matter of fact it won’t last us any time. That is not what God’s grace means.

“ . . . while we look not at the things which are seen”—that battle never stops. The things that are seen are not the devil, but the pressing things, the things that distract; when Christ is formed in us and the essential vision comes through looking at the things which are not seen, we find that God makes other people shadows. If my saintly friends are images of God to me, I have much further to go, yet. God alone must be my Stay and Source and everything. That is the way the godly life is lived.

What is a godly life? A life like God in my bodily edition. Imitation is the great stumblingblock to sanctification. Be yourself first, then go to your own funeral, and let God for ever after be All in all.

*(The quotations are from the book entitled The Following of Christ, by John Tauler.)*

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