



**Devotional Thoughts :: The devil's old delusion!**

**The devil's old delusion! - posted by savannah, on: 2017/12/5 5:49**

The devil's old delusion!

(J.C. Ryle, "The Gospel of Luke" 1858)

"John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire!" Luke 3

We have, in these verses, a specimen of John the Baptist's ministry. It is a portion of Scripture which should always be especially interesting to a Christian mind.

We should first mark the holy boldness with which John addresses the multitudes who came to his baptism. He speaks to them as a "brood of vipers!" He saw the rottenness and hypocrisy of the profession which the crowd around him were making, and uses language descriptive of their case.

His head was not turned by popularity.

He did not care who was offended by his words.

The spiritual disease of those before him was desperate, and of long standing--and he knew that desperate diseases need strong remedies!

Well would it be for the Church of Christ, if it possessed more plain speaking ministers in our days--like John the Baptist.

A morbid dislike to strong language;

an excessive fear of giving offence;

a constant flinching from directness and plain speaking--

are, unhappily, too much the characteristics of the modern Christian pulpit.

Uncharitable language is no doubt always to be deprecated. But there is no charity . . .

in flattering unconverted people,

in abstaining from any mention of their vices,

or in applying smooth names to damnable sins!

There are two texts which are too much forgotten by Christian preachers. In one it is written, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Luke 6:26. In the other it is written, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men--or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were trying to please men--I would not be Christ's servant." Galatians 1:10

We should mark, also--how plainly John speaks to his hearers about HELL and danger!

He tells them that there is a "coming wrath!"

He speaks of "the ax" of God's judgment--and of unfruitful trees being "thrown into the fire!"

The subject of HELL is always offensive to human nature. The minister who dwells much upon it--must expect to find himself regarded as barbaric, violent, unfeeling and narrow-minded!

Men love to hear "smooth things," and to be told of peace, and not of danger. Isaiah 30:10

But the subject of Hell is one that ought not to be kept back, if we desire to do good to souls. It is one that our Lord Jesus Christ brought forward frequently in His public teachings. That loving Savior, who spoke so graciously of the way to Heaven--has also used the plainest language about the way to Hell.

Let us beware of being wise above that which is written, and more charitable than Scripture itself. Let the language of John the Baptist be deeply engraved on our hearts. Let us never be ashamed to avow our firm belief, that there is a "coming wrath" for the impenitent; and that it is possible for a man to be lost, as well as to be saved.

To be silent on the subject--is dreadful treachery to men's souls. It only encourages them to persevere in wickedness, and fosters the devil's old delusion in their minds, "You shall not surely die!" Genesis 3:4

That minister is surely our best friend--who tells us honestly of danger, and warns us, like John the Baptist, to "flee from the wrath to come!"

Never will a man flee--until he sees that there is real cause to be afraid.  
Never will he seek Heaven--until he is convinced that he is on his way to Hell.

The religion in which there is no mention of Hell--is not the religion of John the Baptist, or of our Lord Jesus and His apostles!

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**Re: The way to do good is to amuse people! - posted by savannah, on: 2017/12/6 9:24**

The way to do good is to amuse people!

(J.C. Ryle, 1884)

A great change has taken place in the last forty years. A quantity of church work is continually being carried on both by clergymen and laymen, which, however well-meant, can hardly be called Christian--and in reality has a painful tendency to throw true Christian work into the background, if not to throw it entirely out!

No one, for instance, can fail to observe that a large number of professors are spending all their time and strength on church music, church decorations, church programs, and an incessant round of church attractions. Others are equally absorbed in social work, feeding the poor, and improved dwellings for everyone. Others are incessantly getting up popular concerts, secular lectures, and evening recreations. They proclaim everywhere, that the way to do good is to amuse people!

Others are always occupied with secular guilds, and societies, and associations--and think you very wrong and heathenish if you do not join them. Myriads of professors are restlessly busy about such things from one end of the land to the other; and superficial observers are often saying, "What a great deal of church-work there is in these days!"

Now I would not for a moment be supposed to mean that all the things I have just mentioned are wrong and wicked. Yet I doubt whether the present state of things is altogether healthy. I doubt whether the work of the Holy Spirit on hearts and consciences, is not insensibly being left out in the cold and neglected. Amidst the incessant hustle and bustle about matters of entirely secondary importance--I doubt whether the sort of direct spiritual work to which the Apostles wholly gave themselves, receives as much attention as it ought.

It is quite certain that musical services, and church decorations, and concerts, and bazaars, and social work, and the like--will not save souls.

It is equally certain that, without repentance, and faith, and holy living, and practical, self-denying, kindly charity--no one is fit for Heaven. Do these simple, old-fashioned graces fill the place which they ought to do, in the daily proceedings of many so-called church-workers in this day? I confess I doubt it exceedingly.

I certainly see on every side a vast increase of what people call "church-work." But there is little or no increase of true religion. There undoubtedly is more show and glitter and display. But I extremely doubt whether there is more spiritual reality, and more growth of practical godliness.

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**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2017/12/6 10:14**

We all know "some" of the Churches are going/gone south, but I do not like or respect anyone's opinion that stereotypes the Church. Name Churches, quit stereotyping! Example, The savannah's owns a nice auto mechanics shop in their home town, it been one of the finest and most honest and trustworthy places since the 60's. Now you have people that have been burned at 3 other shops in town, leaving feedback in the local paper and on the internet, Titled "Auto Mechanics Shops" they're all crooks! kind of getting my message? or do I need to elaborate with more examples?

In my opinion Mr. Ryle, "The devil's old delusion", is the folks stereotyping churches. Matter fact Mr. Ryle, if you were a member of any church at the time of your writings, your message would include you, unless your were to have singled out the churches your talking about. I guess haters are going to hate.

As much as we Christians tear each other down, believe it or not, they're still Churches out there doing the lords work. The world don't need to waste their time tearing down the Church, they can just set back and laugh and enjoy the movie, while we tear our Churches down ourselves.

"John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire!" Luke 3

At least John addressed the crowd coming out, he didn't say all people on earth. Why do some here on SI hate the church so much? Wouldn't it be better to just pray for the one's you feel need prayer, rather than letting the world come here and read "The Church" meaning all of them, is not place to be today, they're all crooks. Terrible just terrible, in my personal opinion. Great job of edifying and building up Mr. Ryle.