

## Articles and Sermons :: Evangelical Snobbery - tozer

Evangelical Snobbery - tozer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/7/17 14:59

### Evangelical Snobbery

WE ARE A BAD LOT, WE SONS OF ADAM. One convincing proof of our inherent badness is the way we manage to turn good into evil and make our very blessings a curse to us. Indeed I think a strong case can be made for the belief that sin is merely righteousness in reverse and evil but perverted good. Sin is at bottom the abuse of things in themselves innocent, an illegitimate use of legitimate gifts.

We Christians are cut from the same bolt as the rest of mankind, and while we have been made partakers of a new nature we have not yet been entirely divested of the old. For this reason we are under constant temptation to lapse into the flesh and manifest the old nature rather than the new. I know the arguments against this, but they have never seemed very convincing to me, especially when those who advance them are as likely as not to reveal pretty plain evidences of the old nature before the argument is ended.

Because we are so very human there is real danger that we may inadvertently do the human thing and turn our blessing upside down. Unless we watch and pray in dead earnest we may turn our good into evil and make the grace of God a trap instead of a benefit.

Among the purest gifts we have received from God is truth. Another gift almost as precious, and without which the first would be meaningless, is our ability to grasp truth and appreciate it. For these priceless treasures we should be profoundly grateful; for them our thanks should rise to the Giver of all good gifts throughout the day and in the night seasons. And because these and all other blessings flow to us by grace without merit or worth on our part, we should be very humble and watch with care lest such undeserved favors, if unappreciated, be taken from us.

Men are notoriously lacking in gratitude. Bible history reveals that Israel often took God's gifts too casually and so turned their blessings into a curse. This human fault appears also in the New Testament, and the activities of Christians through the centuries show that as Christ was followed by Satan in the wilderness so truth is often accompanied by a strong temptation to pride. The very truth that makes men free may be and often is fashioned into chains to keep them in bondage. And never forget it: there is no pride so insidious and yet so powerful as the pride of orthodoxy.

Snobbery is the child of pride. Pride at first may be eager and ambitious as it tries to make a place for itself or to prove that it has already attained that place. Later it loses its eager quality and becomes defensive. Finally it ceases to struggle or defend and accepts its own image of itself as something too well established for discussion and too beautiful to improve. When it reaches that stage it has produced a snob, and no snob is ever aware that he is one.

The snob whose claim to superiority is her material possessions is a comical figure, but because she is so pathetic she may with some effort be tolerated. The snob whose glory lies in her ancestors is less easy to endure, but she may be dismissed with the remark that since all she has to be proud of is her forebears the best part of her is under ground. But what shall we say of the intellectual snob? He is unbearable, a man difficult to love and impossible to like. A new school of evangelical Christianity has come up of late which appears to me to be in grave danger of producing a prime crop of intellectual snobs. The disciples of this school are orthodox in creed, if by that we mean that they hold the fundamental tenets of the historic faith; but right there the similarity of their school to New Testament Christianity ends. Their spirit is quite other than the spirit of the early church.

This new breed of Christian may be identified by certain field marks. One is the habit of puffing out the chest and uttering a noise that sounds suspiciously like crowing. Another is the habit of nesting so high that ordinary Christians have difficulty in locating the aerie, and when they do they are unable to climb to it. Then, the song is also quite noticeable in that it consists almost wholly of imitations. Rarely does one of them manage to give forth an original note, but each one waits to hear what Barth or Brunner or Bultmann or Tillich has to say and then imitates it as nearly as possible, only transposing it into the orthodox key. Their mating call is a shrill "Me too! Me too!" which may be heard any time between September and June ringing through the halls of various institutions of evangelical higher learning.

What is overlooked by this new school is that truth is not mental only but moral. The Apostles' Creed quoted in pride, though true, is not true for the one who thus quotes it; one indispensable quality is missing—humility. A theological fact becomes a spiritual truth only when it is received by a humble mind. The proud mind, however orthodox, can never know spiritual truth. Light means nothing to a blind man.

In the Christian life we know most when we know that we do not know, and we understand best when we know that we understand little and that there is much that we will never understand. In the Scriptures knowledge is a kind of experience and wisdom has a moral content. Knowledge without humility is vanity. The religious snob is devoid of truth. Snobbery and truth are irreconcilable.

**Re: Evangelical Snobbery - tozer - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/7/17 22:03**

Wow!!!!!! What powerful words! Tozer's expressions burst through the outer limits of the usual Christian cliches - and therefore he jolts the hypocrite out of his/her slumber.

I am convicted and charged as guilty. May God have mercy on me.  
Thanks for this. You now have me hooked on Tozer.

Diane