

Revivals And Church History :: Wisdom In Reflection

Wisdom In Reflection - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/2/7 8:48

WISDOM IN REFLECTION

By Robert Wurtz II
Part 1

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

One has translated our passage as, "this is the duty of all men." The duty of all people is to fear God and keep His commandments. This is the answer to Solomon's own question as we find it in chapter 2 verse 3, I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. That thing that he discovered, in the final analysis, is to fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. There was no joy in the world, no joy in a life of sin, no joy in an occasional sin. How can a man find happiness when the conscience is in him like a scorpion, stinging every hour of the day? (Ravenshill) As the old hymn says, "trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." Free from the penalty of sins and free from Sin's power, one is set loosed to perform his/her whole duty. Yet the need for grace remains and an ongoing infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Re: Wisdom In Reflection - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/2/7 8:55

Wisdom in Reflection
Part 2

Sin in Moderation?

Solomon did not fall overnight. First he had to deal with his conscience. You will notice that the finality of his fall was that his heart turned to false gods. This is a grim reminder for us. The West has long been slipping as did Solomon. Wealth, wine, women and song as the adage goes. The West has been slipping farther and farther from God. And like him so also now we see false gods and religions being introduced into our countries. Nations that once feared the LORD as a people are now giving way to all manner of religions and gods; especially Islam.

What was Solomon's experience? Was it not like our own as a nation? There were the days of prohibition that Billy Sunday preached so much about. he could see the finality of what alcohol would do to our nation. Yet we have revelation from Solomon, *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine.* We need read no farther to now have the full explanation of the future course of his life. *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.* (Proverbs 20:1) *Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, saith thou, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.* (Proverbs 23:29-35)

Adam Clarke once wrote that, "More iniquity springs from this one source of evil, than from any other cause in the whole system of sin." Leaven is the elixer that distorts the drinkers of wine. Leaven is as symbol of sin. Both wine and sin are intoxicating. Neither are to be taken in moderation.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/2/7 11:05

The Intoxicating Effects of Sin
Part 3

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (I Cor. 5)

Leaven is often used in scripture as a type of sin. Leaven has an effect upon bread that spreads throughout the whole. A 'little' leavens the whole lump. It is said that Jewish women when they marry are given a piece of leavened dough by their mother so that when they begin their family and begin cooking their own meals- this leaven will serve as the leaven passed down from many generations. It creates a connectivity from one generation to the next. The leaven that the great great grandma used through this process has made it down to the current generation. There is much that can be gleaned from this illustration for good and evil.

In like manor certain drinks 'ferment' in the same way that bread ferments. You might say that all 'strong drink' has fermented or contains leaven. For bread this is one thing- but for drink it is something quite different. Any way you look at 'leaven' you can say that the tendency is to 'puff up'. A person under the influence of alcohol will do things they would not ordinarily do.

Sin, I submit, has an intoxicating effect also. There are those who are drunk, but not with wine and stagger but not with strong drink. I think of Romans 1 and 2 when God 'gave them over' to their uncleanness. As if he had allowed them to come to their own warped conclusions necessary to keep their conscience at bay. A drunk man does not rightly reason- nor does one whose mind is *fixed* on lies.

As when a hungry man dreams he is eating and awakes with his hunger not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams he is drinking and awakes faint, with his thirst not quenched, so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion. Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, the prophets, and covered your heads, the seers. (Isaiah 29:8-10 RSV)

Sin comes in and at first has a 'numbing' effect upon the reason, but when the effect wears off and the conscience reasserts itself, it happens as Solomon writes in verse 35, *I will seek it yet again*. In this case the 'it' is wine, but this holds true for all sin that temporarily circumvents the conscience. This, I believe, is one of the reasons why certain sins can be addictive, its because of the initial numbing effect that it has upon the conscience. The conscience begins to trouble the heart and that 'troubling' has to be dealt with somehow.

The only way to purge the conscience is through the blood of Christ. Yet, indulging in sin has a temporary effect that relieves the mind from the weight of the accusing conscience. Joy cannot rightly flow when the conscience is not affirming our relationship with God. In this way the conscience works to prevent self-deception. It makes us conscious of what we have done before God.

The Holy Spirit also is at work to bring us back into full obedience to the known will of God so that our joy may be full. This is the key to a joyful Christian life, walking in complete obedience to the known will of God. Not intoxicated as it were to the reality of our sinful condition- but looking God face to face in a clear conscience. No controversy between us.