

Articles and Sermons :: Obedience,Holiness "articles"

**Obedience,Holiness "articles" - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 4:39**

Holy war!

(Winslow, "The Cross of Christ, the Christian's Weapon")

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

The weapon that is to conquer the world for Christ, is to conquer the world of evil in our hearts; and, wielded by the arm of faith, is to vanquish and overcome all the spiritual opposition by which our path to heaven is intercepted.

We are to overcome, as these martyrs overcame, by the blood of the Lamb.

Heavenly and invincible is this weapon.

No foe can cope with it.

No opposition can resist it.

No confederacy overcome it.

Feeble though the arm may be that wields it, the blood of Jesus, as both an offensive and defensive weapon, is all powerful and irresistible in our holy war.

Whatever may be the foe with whom you wage this holy war, whatever the obstacle to your advance in the divine life; faith, looking to the blood of Jesus, wielding the cross of Christ, drawing its supplies from the resources of Christ, will enroll you among those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb!

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This inward conflict

(Philpot, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil" 1845)

"I know that nothing good lives in me—that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good—but I cannot carry it out." Romans 7:18

Now it is this which makes the Lord's people such a burdened people—that makes them so oppressed in their souls as to cry out against themselves daily, and sometimes hourly—that they are what they are—that they would be spiritual, yet are carnal—that

they would be holy, yet are unholy— that they would have sweet communion with Jesus, yet have such sensual alliance with the things of time and sense— that they would be Christians in word, thought, and deed; yet, in spite of all, they feel their carnal mind, their wretched depravity intertwining, interlacing, gushing forth—contaminating with its polluted stream everything without and within—so as to make them sigh, groan, and cry being burdened, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

Romans 7:24

He would not be entangled in these snares for ten thousand worlds—he hates the evils of his heart, and mourns over the corruptions of his nature. They make the tear fall from his eye, and the sob to heave from his bosom—they make him a wretched man—and fill him day after day with sorrow, bitterness, and anguish.

None but a saved soul, under divine teaching, can see this evil—and mourn and sigh under the depravity, the corruption, the unbelief, the carnality, the wickedness, and the deceitfulness of his evil heart.

This inward conflict, this sore grief, this internal burden, that all the family of God are afflicted with—is an evidence that the life and grace of God are in their bosoms.

"Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord! So you see how it is—in my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin." Rom. 7:25

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The secret of our growth in grace

(Octavius Winslow, "The Lord's Prayer" 1866)

"May Your will be done." Matthew 6:10

The great secret of all quietness and contentedness of mind under all circumstances, is in the resignation of our own will to God's will.

The moment there arises in the breast the least hostility to what God does, or enjoins, there is unhappiness.

The cheerful doing and the patient suffering of our Father's will resolves itself into perfect satisfaction with all that He does. This is . . .  
the daily lesson of life,  
the secret of our growth in grace,  
the essence of our personal holiness.

"May Your will be done!" This is the most

solemn prayer it is possible for man to breathe.

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When You shall enlarge my heart.

(Philpot, "Divine Enlargement and Spiritual Obedience")

"I will run the way of Your commandments, when  
You shall enlarge my heart." Psalm 119:32

The Word of God is full of precepts, but we are totally  
unable to perform them in our own strength. We cannot,  
without divine assistance, perform the precept . . .  
with a single eye to the glory of God,  
from heavenly motives, and  
in a way acceptable to the Lord,  
without special power from on high.

We need an extraordinary power to be put forth in our  
hearts, a special work of the Spirit upon the conscience,  
in order to spiritually fulfill in the slightest degree, the  
least of God's commandments.

None but the Lord Himself can enlarge the heart  
of His people. None but the Lord can expand their  
hearts Godwards, and remove that narrowedness  
and contractedness in divine things, which is the  
plague and burden of a God-fearing soul.

When the Lord is absent,  
when He hides His lovely face,  
when He does not draw near to visit and bless,  
the heart contracts in its own narrow compass.

But when the Lord is pleased to favor the soul with His  
own gracious presence, and bring Himself near to the  
heart, His felt presence opens, enlarges, and expands  
the soul, so as to receive Him in all His love and grace.

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One simple test

(by J. C. Ryle)

"Lord, You know all things." John 21:17

There is something unspeakably solemn in the  
thought that the Lord Jesus knows all things.

There is an eye that sees all our daily conduct.

There is an ear that hears all our daily words.

All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do.

Concealment is impossible.

Hypocrisy is useless.

We may deceive ministers.

We may fool our family and neighbors.

But the Lord sees us through and through.

We cannot deceive Christ!

We ought to endeavor to make practical use of this truth. We should strive to live as in the Lord's sight, and, like Abraham, to "walk before Him."

Let it be our daily aim . . .  
to say nothing we would not like Christ to hear; and  
to do nothing we would not like Christ to see.

Let us measure every difficult question as to right and wrong by one simple test, "How would I behave, if Jesus was standing by my side?"

Such a standard is not extravagant and absurd.

It is a standard that interferes with no duty or relation of life. It interferes with nothing but sin.

Happy is he that tries to realize his Lord's presence, and to do all and say all as unto Christ.

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The daily business of a Christian

(William Plumer, "Vital Godliness: A Treatise on Experimental and Practical Piety" 1864)

The daily business of a Christian is to . . .  
resist the devil,  
deny himself,  
overcome the world,  
crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts,  
imitate Christ,  
walk with God.

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THE PRETENDER!

-Spurgeon, "Secret Sins"

"THE FOLLY OF SECRET SINS"

Pretender, you are fair to look upon; your conduct outwardly upright, amiable, liberal, generous and Christian-- but you indulge in some sin which the eye of man has not yet detected.

But, pretender, we say unto you, you are a fool to think of harboring a secret sin; and you are a fool for this one reason, that your sin is not a secret sin- 'it is known' and shall one day be revealed; perhaps very soon.

Your sin is not a secret!  
The eye of God has seen it!  
You have sinned before his face!

You have shut the door, and drawn the curtains, and kept out the eye of the sun, but God's eye pierces through the darkness!

The brick walls which surrounded you were as transparent as glass to the eye of the Almighty!

The darkness which did gird you was as bright as the summer's noon to the eye of him who beholds all things.

Don't you know, O man, that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do?"

As the priest ran his knife into the entrails of his victim, discovered the heart and liver, and whatever else did lie within, so are you, O man, seen by God, cut open by the Almighty!

You have no secret chamber where you can hide yourself.  
You have no dark cellar where you can conceal your soul.  
Dig deep, yes, deep as hell, but you cannot find earth enough upon the globe to cover your sin. If you should heap the mountains on its grave, those mountains would tell the tale of what was buried in their bowels.

If you could cast your sin into the sea,  
a thousand babbling waves would tell the secret out.

There is no hiding it from God!

Your sin is photographed in high heaven!

The deed when it was done was photographed upon the sky, and there it shall remain, and you shall see yourself one day revealed to the gazing eyes of all men-- a hypocrite, a pretender, who sinned in fancied secret, observed in all your acts by the all-seeing Jehovah.

O what fools men are, to think they can do anything in secret!

This world is like the 'glass hives' wherein bees sometimes work-- we look down upon them, and we see all the operations of the little creatures.  
So God looks down on us and sees all.

Our eyes are weak; we cannot look through the darkness.  
But his eye, like an orb of fire, penetrates the blackness, and reads the thoughts of man, and sees his acts when he thinks himself most concealed.

Oh! it were a thought enough to curb us from all sin, if it were truly applied by us-  
"You, God, see me!"

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The right way for a Christian to live is to do what his Master bids him, leaving all consequences to the Almighty.  
If I am willing to do what God tells me, as he tells me, when he tells me, and because he tells me, I shall not turn back in the day of battle.  
-Spurgeon

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The image and reflection of Christ!

(From Winslow's, "A Full Christ for Empty Sinners")

As Christ is taken into our hearts by faith, He becomes a part of our moral nature, an integrated element of our spiritual being. Consequently we grow Christ-like, or rather, Christ grows in us. We become more holy, more meek, more gentle, more humble; in a word, the image of our Lord is more developed in us, and we grow less man-like and more God-like; and the quietness of our spirit, and the courtesy of our demeanor, and the lowliness of our minds, and the gentle, winning sweetness of our whole carriage and speech are but the image and reflection of Christ!

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Called to a holy life...

Those whom the Savior saved upon the tree are

in due time effectually called by the power of  
God the Holy Spirit unto holiness--  
they leave their sins,  
they endeavor to be like Christ,  
they choose holiness--  
not out of any compulsion, but from the stress of a new  
nature, which leads them to rejoice in holiness,  
just as naturally as beforetime they delighted in sin.

He called them that they might be holy, and holiness  
is the beauty produced by His workmanship in them.

The excellences which we see in a believer  
are as much the work of God as the atonement itself.

-Thomas Watson

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Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

Christ will be master of the heart, and sin must be mortified.

If your life is unholy, then your heart is  
unchanged, and you are an unsaved person.

The Savior will sanctify His people, renew them,  
give them a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness.

The grace that does not make a man better  
than others is a worthless counterfeit.

Christ saves His people,  
not IN their sins,  
but FROM their sins.

Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

-Spurgeon

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Every worldly Christian

-Spurgeon, "Travailing for Souls"

Every worldly Christian hinders the progress of the  
gospel-- Every member of a church who is living in secret  
sin, who is tolerating in his heart any thing that he knows to  
be wrong, who is not seeking eagerly his own personal  
sanctification, is to that extent hindering the work of the  
Spirit of God.

For to the extent that we maintain known unholiness, we  
restrain the Spirit. He cannot work by us as long as any

conscious sin is tolerated.

It is not over breaking of commandments that I am now speaking of, brethren, but I include 'worldliness' also-- a care for carnal things, and a carelessness about spiritual things; having enough grace just to make us hope that you are a Christian, but not enough to prove you are; bearing a shriveled apple here and there on the topmost bough, but not much fruit; this I mean, this 'partial barrenness'-- not complete enough to condemn, yet complete enough to restrain the blessing, this robs the treasure of the church, and hinders her progress.

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**Re: Obedience "articles" - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 4:58**

Excelsior!

Spurgeon, "Christ's People- Imitators of Him"

The fact that perfection is beyond our reach, should not diminish the fervor of our desire after it.

The Christian man; though he feels he never can mount to the heights of complete excellence, and perceives that he never can on earth become the exact image of Christ, still holds it up before him, and measures his own deficiencies by the distance between himself and Jesus.

This will he do; forgetting all he has attained, he will press forward, crying, 'Excelsior!' going upwards still, desiring to be conformed more and more to the image of Christ Jesus!

**Re: Obedience,Holiness "articles" - posted by enid, on: 2007/2/28 5:05**

Good challenging articles about holiness, obedience, hypocrisy, worldliness etc...such things that most Christians nowadays do not want to hear about.

They don't want to hear about them because it challenges their comfort zone.

It might mean we are actually accountable to God, and we are.

More please!

Thanks

God bless.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 5:08**

Quote:

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enid wrote:

Good challenging articles about holiness, obedience, hypocrisy, worldliness etc...such things that most Christians nowadays do not want to hear about

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More please!

Thanks

God bless.  
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as ravenhill said or something like this, go to a church where you go home and need to make some "repairs"  
may we be challenged every day to live a more holy life and obedience to our father in heaven

**Re: Obedience,Holiness "articles" - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 5:23**

Have you, my reader, wept for sin?

The following is from Octavius Winslow's sermon, "The Disciple Washing Christ's Feet, or, The Service of Love"

"A certain immoral woman heard Jesus was there and brought a beautiful jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them." Luke 7:37-38

Those tears! who can analyze them?  
Where shall we find pearls so priceless,  
or stones so precious and of fairer colors?

She washed Christ's feet with the tears  
of penitence. There are no tears in Christ's  
view more costly or precious than these.

This woman was poor in spirit, humble and  
contrite, and as she stood behind her sin  
forgiving Savior, her tears of godly sorrow  
for sin rained fast upon his feet.

Have you, my reader, wept for sin?

Does the recollection of past transgression  
make you sorry? Does the memory of the sins  
of your youth, the transgressions of riper years,  
the sinful infirmities of old age, humble you in  
the dust?

Holier and more precious tears were never shed  
than those wept for having sinned against God  
at Christ's feet.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 5:24**

If you do not turn...

by Spurgeon-

There is grace for the man who quits his sin,  
but there is tribulation and wrath upon every man  
who continues in evil.

"If you do not turn, he will whet his sword;  
he has bent his bow, and made it ready."

The gospel is all tenderness to the repenting,  
but all terror to the obstinate offender.  
It has pardon for the very chief of sinners,  
and mercy for the vilest of the vile,  
if they will forsake their sins.

But it is according to our gospel that if a person goes on in  
his iniquity, he shall be cast into hell, and he that believes  
not shall be damned.

With deep love to the souls of men, I bear witness to the  
truth that he who does not turn with repentance and faith  
to Christ, shall go away into punishment as everlasting as  
the life of the righteous.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 6:37**

Oh, how changed a man is he now!

(Octavius Winslow)

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new  
creature; old things have passed away; behold,  
all things are become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

Originally shaped in iniquity, and conceived in sin--the  
love of sin and the hatred of holiness are born with us.

But when by the Holy Spirit we are born again, this  
original and natural love of sin and hatred of holiness  
are reversed! A new and heavenly principle is implanted  
which leads the regenerate to hate sin and love holiness.

Now, it is in this divine principle that the love of holiness  
in the believer is implanted--and a power in antagonism  
to sin is implanted in his heart.

What a reverse now transpires!

The regenerate now love what they once  
hated--and hate what they once loved!

We loved sin, lived in sin, in some of its many forms . . .  
intellectual sin,  
gross sin,  
refined sin,

open sin,  
secret sin,  
the lust of the flesh,  
the lust of the eye,  
the pride of life,  
the power of Mammon,  
the fascination of the world,  
the idolatry of the creature,  
the love of SELF.

Some, or all these forms of sin maintained the supremacy, and held their unbroken, undisputed rule.

Oh, how changed a man is he now!

The sins which he once committed,  
the objects which he once loved,  
the tastes which he once cultivated,  
the sensualities in which he once indulged,  
have lost their power . . .  
to fascinate,  
to please,  
to enthrall.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 6:39**

Afflictions-brooks

All the afflictions which attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit and glorious advantage.

Afflictions discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, which the soul has never yet seen.

Afflictions contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins. Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses His people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine.

Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases. Colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions destroy the corruptions which are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, there have been no idols found among them.

Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin<sup>^</sup>—which is a greater evil than hell itself.

Afflictions assist to make us more fruitful in holiness. 'But He afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some 'the mother of virtue.' Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some Scriptures until he was in affliction.

God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that hit Stephen's head, did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God. God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of His blessed self.

Christians, by their afflictions, gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening of them to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

Afflictions keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised<sup>^</sup>—the sweeter s

cent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

Afflictions bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God.

Afflictions revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love which is cold, and they quicken that faith which is decaying, and they put life into those hopes which are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts which are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it.

Those who are in adversity do better understand Scriptures. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abates the loveliness of the world which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity.

The afflictions which attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night—but joy comes in the morning' (Psalm 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm; this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory; between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown; between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream?

It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

There are none of God's afflicted ones, who have not their intermissions and respites while under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

It is mercy that our affliction is not execution—but a correction. He who has deserved hanging, may be glad if he escapes with a whipping.

God's corrections are our instructions,  
His lashes are our lessons,  
His scourges are our schoolmasters,  
His chastisements are our admonitions.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 6:42**

The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears—brooks

Sin is a turning the back upon God—and the face towards hell. Repentance is a turning the back upon sin—and a setting the face towards God!

True repentance is a sorrowing for sin because it is offensive to God. Peter was sorry for his sin; Judas was sorry for his punishment. Peter grieves because Christ was grieved; Judas grieves because he would be damned.

As Noah's flood drowned his nearest and his dearest friends, so the flood of penitent tears drowns men's nearest and their dearest lusts! Be they Isaacs or Benjamins, be they right eyes or right hands, true repentance puts all to the sword; it spares neither father nor mother, neither Agag nor Achan.

Repentance is a turning from all sin, without any

reservation or exception. One stab at the heart kills, one hole in the ship sinks her, one act of treason makes a traitor. Just so, one sin not forsaken, not turned from, will undo a soul forever.

A true penitent looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling, and polluting. He looks thus upon every sin, turns his heart against every sin, and makes him not only to refrain from sin—but to forsake it, and to loathe it more than hell.

True repentance breaks the heart with sighs, sobs, and groans—that . . .  
a loving Father is offended,  
a blessed Savior crucified, and  
the sweet Comforter grieved.

Penitent Mary Magdalene weeps much, as well as loves much. Tears, instead of jewels, were the ornaments of penitent David's bed. Surely that sweet singer never sang more melodiously, than when his heart was broken most penitentially.

The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears;  
penitent tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. The bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water; the strongest, the purest, the truest, the most permanent, and the most excellent joy is made of the waters of repentance.

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."  
Psalm 126:5

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 6:43**

A heaven unto me!-brooks

That knowledge which accompanies salvation, is a heart-affecting knowledge. It affects the heart with Christ, and all spiritual things. Oh, it does wonderfully endear Christ and the things of Christ to the soul.

"Oh, feed me with Your love—Your 'raisins' and Your 'apples'—for I am utterly lovesick!" Song 2:5 "Oh," says the spouse, "my heart is taken with Christ, it is ravished with His love; my soul is burning, my soul is beating towards Christ. Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! I cannot live in myself, I cannot live in my duties, I cannot live in external privileges, I cannot live in outward mercies; I can live only in Christ, who is . . .  
my life,  
my love,  
my joy,  
my crown,

my all in all.  
Oh, the more I come to know Him . . .  
in His natures,  
in His names,  
in His offices,  
in His discoveries,  
in His visits,  
in His beauties,  
the more I find my heart and affections to prize  
Christ, to run after Christ, to be affected with  
Christ, and to be wonderfully endeared to Christ!

Oh, God forbid that my heart should be affected  
or taken with anything in comparison with Christ.  
The more I know Him, the more I love Him;  
the more I know Him, the more I desire Him;  
the more I know Him, the more my heart is knit unto Him.  
His beauty is captivating,  
His love is ravishing,  
His goodness is attracting,  
His manifestations are enticing,  
His person is enamoring,  
His lovely looks please me,  
His pleasant voice delights me,  
His precious Spirit comforts me,  
His holy word rules me;  
All these things make Christ to be a heaven unto me!

Oh, but all that mere notional knowledge, that speculative  
knowledge, which leaves a man short of salvation—never  
affects the heart; it never draws it, it never endears the  
heart to Christ, or to the precious things of Christ. Hence  
it is that such men, under all their notions, under all their  
light and knowledge, have . . .  
no affection to Christ,  
no delight in Christ,  
no workings of heart after Christ.

"If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed."  
1 Corinthians 16:22

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 10:00**

We do not live the lives of Christians!

(William Law, "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life")

If our common life is not a common course of . . .  
humility,  
self denial,  
renunciation of the world,  
poverty of spirit,  
and heavenly affection,  
we do not live the lives of Christians!

But yet though it is thus plain that this, and this  
alone, is Christianity: a uniform, open, and visible

practice of all these virtues. Yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found, even among the better sort of people.

You see them often at Church, and pleased with fine preachers. But look into their lives, and you see them just the same sort of people as others are, who make no pretenses to devotion. They have . . .  
the same taste of the world,  
the same worldly cares, and fears, and joys;  
the same turn of mind,  
equally vain in their desires.

You see . . .  
the same fondness for state and equipage,  
the same pride and vanity of dress,  
the same self love and indulgence,  
the same foolish friendships, and groundless hatreds,  
the same levity of mind, and trifling spirit,  
the same fondness for diversions,  
the same idle dispositions, and vain ways of spending their time as the rest of the world, who make no pretenses to Christianity.

**Re: Obedience,Holiness "articles" - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/28 10:14**

Observe the holy virtues

(John Angell James, "Elizabeth Bales--a Pattern for Sunday School Teachers & Tract Distributors")

"In all things see that you are an example of good works--holy in your teaching, serious in behavior."  
(Titus 2:7)

Never was there . . .  
a more pure and sincere creature;  
a more dutiful daughter;  
a more harmless and inoffensive being,  
than she was! And yet how did she confess  
and bewail her sinfulness in the sight of God;  
how entirely did she renounce all dependence  
upon her own good doings, and how exclusively  
did she rely upon the righteousness of Christ!

Observe the holy virtues which clustered  
in her character . . .

how profound was her humility  
how gentle her demeanor,  
how striking her meekness,  
how uncomplaining her submission,  
how exemplary her patience,  
how exquisite her benevolence,  
how ardent her zeal,

how tender her attachments,  
how intense her piety!

And, to crown all, how unmixed was all  
this with any spiritual pride, or any sense  
of superiority, or any sanctimonious airs.  
How much is there for all of us to learn and  
to copy! Be stimulated, encouraged and  
guided by the example of Elizabeth Bales!

"You should be an example to the believers in  
speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."  
(1 Timothy 4:12)

**Re: Obedience,Holiness "articles" - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/1 4:03**

The moral power of the cross

-J.L. Dagg, Manual of Theology

Contemplating Jesus' sacrifice is the highest motive to holiness.

We resolve to live to him who died for us.  
The world loses it's charm.  
Sin appears infinitely hateful.  
We look on Him whom we have pierced, and mourn.  
He was murdered by our sins.

In the presence of the cross, we feel that omnipotent grace  
has seized our hearts, and we surrender to dying love.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/2 4:15**

The Cross and Its Power-h.bonar

Before I can live a Christian life, I must be a Christian. Am I such? I ought to know this. Do I know it, and in knowing it, know whose I am and whom I serve? Or is my title to the name still questionable, still a matter of anxious debate and search?

If I am to live as a son of God, I must be a son, and I must know it. Otherwise my life will be an artificial imitation, a piece of barren mechanism, performing certain excellent movements, but destitute of vital heat and force. Here many fail.

They try to live like sons in order to make themselves sons, forgetting God's simple plan for attaining sonship at once, As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

The faith of many among us is, alter all, but an attempt to believe; their repentance but an attempt to repent; and, in so doing, they only use words which they have learned from others. It is not the love of holiness that actuates them, but (at best) the love of the love of holiness. It is not the love of God that fills them, but the love of the love of God.

God's description of a Christian man is clear and well-defined. It has about it so little of the vague and wide that one wonders how any mistake should have arisen on this point, and so many dubious, so many false claims put in.

A Christian is one who "has tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet 2:3); who has been "begotten again unto a lively hope" (1 Pet 1:3); who has been "quickened together with Christ" (Eph 2:5); made a partaker of Christ (11eb 3:14); a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4); who "has been delivered from this present evil world" (Gal 1:4).

Such is God's description of one who has found his way to the cross, and is warranted in taking to himself the Antiochian name of "Christian," or the apostolic name of "saint." Of good about himself, previous to his receiving the record of the free forgiveness, he cannot speak. He remembers nothing lovable that could have recommended him to God; nothing fit



that could have qualified him for the divine favor, save that he needed life. All that he can say for himself is that he "has known and believed the love that God hath to us" (1 John 4:16); and, in believing, has found that which makes him not merely a happy, but a holy man. He has discovered the fountainhead of a holy life.

Have I then found my way to the cross? If so, I am safe. I have the everlasting life. The first true touch of that cross has secured for me the eternal blessing. I am in the hands of Christ, and none shall pluck me out (John 10:28).

The cross makes us whole; not all at once indeed, but it does the work effectually. Before we reached it we were not "whole," but broken and scattered, nay, without a center toward which to gravitate. The cross forms that center and, in doing so, it draws together the disordered fragments of our being; it "unites our heart" (Psa 86:11), producing a wholeness or unity which no object of less powerful attractiveness could accomplish. It is a wholeness or unity which, beginning with the individual, reproduces itself on a larger scale, but with the same center of gravitation, in the church of God.

Of spiritual health, the cross is the source. From it there goes forth the "virtue" (dunamis, the power, Luke 6:19) that heals all maladies, be they slight or deadly. For "by His stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5); and in Him we find "the tree of life," with its healing leaves (Rev 22:2). Golgotha has become Gilead, with its skillful Physician and its "bruised" balm (Jer 8:22; Isa 53:5). Old Latimer says well regarding the woman whom Christ cured, "She believed that Christ was such a healthful man that she should be sound as soon as she might touch Him." The "whole head sick, and the whole heart faint" (Isa 1:5); but now the sickness is gone, and the vigor comes again to the fainting heart. The look, or rather the Object looked at, has done its work (Isa 45:22); the serpent of brass has accomplished that which no earthly medicines could effect. Not to us can it now be said, "Thou hast no healing medicines" (Jer 30:13), for the word of the great Healer is, "I will bring health and cure; yea, I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth" (Jer 33:6). Thus it is by the abundance of that peace and truth, revealed to us in the cross, that our cure is wrought.

The cure is not perfected in an hour. But, as the sight of the cross begins it, so does it complete it at last. The pulses of new health now beat in all our veins. Our whole being recognizes the potency of the divine medicine, and our diseases yield to it.

Yes, the cross heals. It possesses the double virtue of killing sin and quickening holiness. It makes all the fruits of the flesh to wither, while it cherishes and ripens the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal 5:22). By this the hurt of the soul is not "healed slightly," but truly and thoroughly. It acts like the fresh balm of southern air to one whose constitution the frost and damp of the far north had undermined. It gives new tone and energy to our faculties, a new bent and aim to all our purposes, and a new elevation to all our hopes and longings. It gives the death-blow to self, it mortifies our members which are upon the earth. It crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts. Thus, looking continually to the cross, each day, as at the first, we are made sensible of the restoration of our soul's health; evil loosens its hold, while good strengthens and ripens.

It is not merely that we "glory in the cross" (Gal 6:14), but we draw strength from it. It is the place of weakness, for there Christ "was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor 13:4); but it is, notwithstanding, the fountainhead of power to us. For as out of death came forth life, so out of weakness came forth strength. This is strength, not for one thing, but for everything. It is strength for activity or for endurance, for holiness as well as for work. He that would be holy or useful must keep near the cross. The cross is the secret of power, and the pledge of victory. With it we fight and overcome. No weapon can prosper against it, nor enemy prevail. With it we meet the fightings without as well as the fears within. With it we war the good warfare, we wrestle with principalities and powers, we "withstand" and we "stand" (Eph 6:11 - 13); we fight the good fight, we finish the course, we keep the faith (2 Tim 4:7).

Standing by the cross, we become imitators of the crucified One. We seek to be like Him, men who please not themselves (Rom 15:3); who do the Father's will, counting not our life dear to us who love our neighbors as ourselves, and the brethren as He loved us; who pray for our enemies; who revile not again when reviled; who threaten not when we suffer, but commit ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously; who live not to ourselves, and who die not to ourselves; who are willing to be of "no reputation," but to "suffer shame for His name," to take the place and name of "servant," nay, to count "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb 11:26). "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (has "died to sin," as in Romans 6:10), "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 Pet 4:1,2).

Standing by the cross, we realize the meaning of such a text as this: "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom 6:6); where the crucifixion of our old man, the destruction of the body of sin, and deliverance from the bondage of sin, are strikingly linked to one another, and linked, all of them, to the cross of Christ. Or we read the meaning of another: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Here the one Paul (not two Pauls, or two persons), speaks throughout, as completely identified with Christ and His cross. It is not one part of Paul in this clause and another in that; it is the one whole Paul throughout, who is crucified, dies, lives!

Like Isaac, he has been "received from the dead in a figure"; and as Abraham would, after the strange Moriah transactio

n, look on Isaac as given back from the dead, so would Jehovah reckon and treat this Paul as a risen man! Isaac would be the same Isaac, and yet not the same; so Paul is the same Paul, and yet not the same! He has passed through some thing which alters his state legally, and his character morally; he is new. Instead of the first Adam, who was of the earth earthy, he has got the last Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, for his guest: "Christ liveth in him"; "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (just as he says, "yet not I, but the grace of God in me"); and so he lives the rest of his life on earth, holding fast his connection with the crucified Son of God and His love. Or again, we gather light upon that text: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal 5:24); and that: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal 6:14).

Standing by the cross, we realize the death of the Surety, and discover more truly the meaning of passages such as these: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:3); "Ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world" (Col 2:20); His death (and yours with Him) dissolved your connection with these; "If one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor 5:14); "To this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom 14:9).

Romans 6:7-12, "He that is dead is freed from sin; now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him; for in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God; likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

There is something peculiarly solemn about these passages. They are very unlike, both in tone and words, the light speech which some indulge in, when speaking of the gospel and its forgiveness. Ah, this is the language of one who has in him the profound consciousness that severance from sin is one of the mightiest, as well as most blessed, things in the universe. He has learned how deliverance from condemnation may be found, and all legal claims against him met. But, more than this, he has learned how the grasp of sin can be unclasp'd, how its serpent-folds can be unwound, how its impurities can be erased, how he can defy its wiles and defeat its strength--how he can be holy! This is, to him, of discoveries one of the greatest and most gladdening. Forgiveness itself is precious, chiefly as a step to holiness. How any one, after reading statements such as those of the apostle, can speak of sin, or pardon, or holiness without awe, seems difficult to understand. Or how any one can feel, that the forgiveness which the believing man finds at the cross of Christ is a release from the obligation to live a holy life, is no less incomprehensible.

It is true that sin remains in the saint; and it is equally true that this sin does not bring condemnation back to him. But there is a way of stating this which would almost lead to the inference that watchfulness has thus been rendered less necessary; that holiness is not now so great an urgency; that sin is not so terrible as formerly. To tell a sinning saint that no amount of sin can alter the perfect standing before God, into which the blood of Christ brings us, may not be technically or theologically incorrect; but this mode of putting the truth is not that of the epistle to the Romans or Ephesians; it sounds almost like, "Continue in sin because grace abounds"; and it is not Scriptural language. The apostolic way of putting the point is that of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. ..If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Thus, then, that which cancels the curse provides the purity. The cross not only pardons, but it purifies. From it there gushes out the double fountain of peace and holiness. It heals, unites, strengthens, quickens, blesses. It is God's wing under which we are gathered, and "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa 91:1).

But we have our cross to bear, and our whole life is to be a bearing of it. It is not Christ's cross that we are to carry; that is too heavy for us, and besides, it has been done once for all. But our cross remains, and much of a Christian life consists in a true, honest, decided bearing of it. Not indeed to be nailed to it, but to take it up and carry it--that is our calling. To each of us a cross is presented when we assume the name of Christ. Strange will it be if we refuse to bear it; counting it too heavy or too sharp, too much associated with reproach and hardship. The Lord's words are very uncompromising, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). Our refusal to do this may contribute not a little to our ease and reputation here; but it will not add to the weight of glory which the resurrection of the just shall bring to those who have confessed the Master, and borne His shame, and done His work in an evil world.

With the "taking up of the cross daily" (Luke 9:23), our Lord connects the denial of self and the following of Him. He "pleaded not Himself; neither must we, for the servant is not above his master. He did not His own will; neither must we, for the disciple is not above his Lord. If we endure no hardness, but are self-indulgent, self-sparing men, how shall we be followers of Him? If we grudge labor, or sacrifice, or time, or money, or our good name, are we remembering His example? If we shrink from the weight of the cross, or its sharpness, or the roughness of the way along which we have to carry it, are we keeping His word in mind, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (Matt 20:23)?

The cross on which we are crucified with Christ, and the cross which we carry are different things, yet they both point in

one direction, and lead us along one way. They both protest against sin, and summon to holiness. They both "condemn the world," and demand separation from it. They set us upon ground so high and so unearthly, that the questions which some raise as to the expediency of conformity to the world's ways are answered as soon as they are put, and the sophistries of the flesh, pleading in behalf of gaiety and revelry, never for a moment perplex us. The kingdom is in view, the way is plain, the cross is on our shoulders; and shall we turn aside alter fashions, frivolities, pleasures, and unreal beauties, even were they all as harmless as men say they are?

It may seem a small thing now to be a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God, but it will be found a fearful thing hereafter, when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him. It may seem a possible thing just now, by avoiding all extremes and all thoroughness, either in religion or in worldliness, to conjoin both of these, but in the day of the separation of the real from the unreal, it will be discovered to have been a poor attempt to accomplish an impossibility; a failure--a failure for eternity, a failure as complete as it is disastrous and remediless. Egypt and Canaan cannot coalesce; Babylon and Jerusalem can never be one. These are awful words, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness, and surely the Holy Spirit meant what He said, when He enjoined, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

The cross, then, makes us decided men. It brings both our hearts and our wills to the side of God. It makes us feel the cowardice, as well as guilt, of indecision, bidding us be bold and stable, "holding faith and a good conscience"; all the more because the wide "liberality" of modern free-thinking has confounded skepticism with candor, and recognizes in religious indifference a virtue and a grace. Not to take any side strongly is no evidence of a large soul or a great purpose. It is generally an indication of littleness.

The furrows drawn by a firm hand are strongly and deeply drawn. It is no surface work; soil and subsoil are turned over with a decision which implies that, if the work is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. The man of true purpose and strong mind handles his plough resolutely, from end to end of the longest furrow, till the whole field be wrought. Thus do men of true will and aim proceed, both in belief and action. Having put their hand to the plough, they do not so much as look back.

The thoughts and purposes of men bear the impress of the mind from which they emerge, as much in their decision, as in their general character. As earth's streams are decided in their flow, and owe the measure of their decision to the elevation of the mountain-range down whose steep they pour, so is it with the opinions and actings of men. Decision is no proof of weakness; it is not bigotry, nor intolerance, nor ignorance, though it has sometimes been the emanation of these, and identified with them.

Every thing in the Bible is decided; its statements of fact, its revelations of truth, its condemnation of error, its declarations respecting God and man, respecting our present and our future. Its characters are decided men--Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Paul. It speaks always with authority, as expecting to be implicitly credited. It reckons on our receiving its teaching, not doubtfully but certainly; and it leaves us only the alternative of denying its whole authenticity, or of accepting its revelations, without a qualification and without a subterfuge. To excuse ourselves for doubt and indecision, and oscillation of faith, by pointing to differences of creed, is to suggest either that Scripture is not infallible, or that it is not intelligible.

The Bible is God's direct revelation to each man into whose hands it comes; and, for the reception of all that it contains, each man is responsible, though all his fellows should reject it. The Judgment Day will decide who is right; meanwhile it is to God and not to man that we are to listen. For the understanding of God's revelation, each one is accountable. If it can be proved that the Bible is so uncertainly written as to render diversity of thought a necessity, or so obscurely expressed as to keep men in ignorance, then, when the day of reckoning comes, the misled man will have opportunity of substantiating his charges against God, and claiming deduction from his penalty, on the plea of the ambiguity of the statute. Meanwhile we are responsible for decision--decision, in thought and action, on every point which the Holy Spirit has written; and it is not likely that the Spirit of wisdom and love, in writing a Book for us, would write so darkly as to be unintelligible, or should give such an uncertain sound that no man could be sure as to which, out of a score of meanings suggested by man, was the genuine.

Man's usual thought is that the want of explicitness in the Bible is the cause of diversity of opinion, and that a little more fullness of statement and clearness of language would have prevented all sects and confusions. The answer to this is twofold: (1) That greater fullness would have only opened new points of divergence and variance, so that, instead of a hundred opinions, we should, in that case, have a thousand; (2) That the real cause of all the divergence and unsettlement is to be found in man's moral state; that there is not a veil upon the Bible, but scales on human eyes; and that, were that spiritual imperfection entirely removed, the difficulty would be, not how to believe, but how not to believe; and the wonder would be how it was possible for us to attach more than one meaning to words so significant and simple.