

Articles and Sermons :: The Heart - J. C. Ryle**The Heart - J. C. Ryle - posted by StarofG0D (), on: 2011/5/21 12:54**

THE HEART

by J. C. Ryle

"Give me your heart." Proverbs 23:26

"Your heart is not right in the sight of God." Acts 8:21

The heart is the main thing in true religion. I make no excuse for asking the special attention of my readers, while I try to say a few things about the heart.

The head is not the principal thing. You may know the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and consent that it is good. You may be clear, correct, and sound in your religious opinions. But all this time you may be walking in the broad way which leads to destruction. It is your heart which is the main point. "Is your heart right in the sight of God?"

Your outward life may be moral, decent, respectable, in the eyes of people. Your minister, and friends, and neighbors, may see nothing very wrong in your general conduct. But all this time you may be hanging on the brink of everlasting ruin. It is your heart which is the main thing. Is that heart right in the sight of God?

Wishes and desires are not enough to make a Christian. You may have many good feelings about your soul. You may, like Balaam, long to "die the death of the righteous." (Num. 23:10.) You may sometimes tremble at the thought of judgment to come, or be melted to tears by the tidings of Christ's love. But all this time you may be slowly drifting downward into hell. It is your heart which is the main thing. Is that heart right in the sight of God?

There are three things which I propose to do in order to impress the subject of this paper upon your mind.

I. First, I will show you the immense importance of the heart in religion.

II. Secondly, I will show you the heart which is wrong in the sight of God.

III. Lastly, I will show you the heart which is right in the sight of God.

May God bless the whole subject to the soul of everyone into whose hands this book may fall! May the Holy Spirit, without whom all preaching and writing can do nothing, apply this paper to many consciences, and make it an arrow to pierce many hearts!

I. In the first place, I will show the immense IMPORTANCE of the heart in religion.

How shall I prove this point? From whence shall I fetch my arguments? I must turn to the Word of God. In questions of this kind it matters nothing what the world thinks right or wrong. There is only one sure test of truth. What says the Scripture? What is written in the Bible? What is the mind of the Holy Spirit? If we cannot submit our judgments to this infallible umpire, it is useless to pretend that we have any religion at all.

For one thing, the Bible teaches that the heart is that part of us on which the state of our soul depends. "Out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23.) The reason, the understanding, the conscience, the affections, are all second in importance to the heart. The heart is the man. It is the seat of all spiritual life, and health, and strength, and growth. It is the hinge and turning-point in the condition of man's soul. If the heart is alive to God and quickened by the Spirit, the man is a living Christian. If the heart is dead and has not the Spirit, the man is dead before God. The heart is the man! Tell me not mere

ly what a man says and professes, and where a man goes on Sunday, and what money he puts in the collecting plate. Tell me rather what his heart is, and I will tell you what he is. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.)

For another thing, the Bible teaches that the heart is that part of us at which God especially looks. "Man looks at the outward appearance—but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.) "Every way of man is right in his own eyes—but the Lord ponders the heart." (Proverbs 21:2.) Man is naturally content with the outward part of religion, with outward morality, outward correctness, outward regular attendance on means of grace. But the eyes of the Lord look much further. He regards our motives. He "weighs the spirits." (Prov. 16:2.) He says Himself, "I the Lord am the searcher of the heart, the tester of the thoughts." (Jer. 17:10.)

For another thing, the Bible teaches that the heart is the first and foremost thing which God asks man to give him. "My son," He says, "give Me your heart." (Prov., 23:26.) We may give God a bowed head and a serious face, our bodily presence in His house, and a loud amen. But until we give God our hearts, we give Him nothing of any value. The sacrifices of the Jews in Isaiah's time were many and costly. They drew near to God with their mouth, and honored Him with their lips. But they were all wholly useless, because the heart of the worshipers was far from God. (Matt. 15:8.) The zeal of Jehu against idolatry was very great, and his services in pulling down idols brought him many temporal rewards. But there was one great blot on his character which spoiled all. He did not walk in the law of God "with all his heart." (2 Kings 10:31.) The heart is what the husband desires to have in his wife, the parent in his child, and the master in his servant. And the heart is what God desires to have in professing Christians.

What is the heart in man's body? It is the principal and most important organ in the whole frame. A man may live many years in spite of fevers, wounds, and loss of limbs. But a man cannot live if you injure his heart. Just so it is with the heart in religion. It is the fountain of life to the soul.

What is the root to the tree? It is the source of all life, and growth, and fruitfulness. You may cut off the branches, and wound the trunk, and the tree may yet survive. But if you hurt the root, the tree will die. Just so it is with the heart in religion. It is the root of life to the soul.

What is the mainspring to the watch? It is the cause of all its movements, and the secret of all its usefulness. The case may be costly and beautiful. The face and figures may be skillfully made. But if there is anything wrong with the mainspring the works will not go. Just so it is with the heart in religion. It is the mainspring of life to the soul.

What is the furnace to the steam engine? It is the cause of all its motion and power. The machinery may be properly made. Every screw, and valve, and joint, and crank, and rod may be in its right place. But if the furnace is cold and the water is not turned into steam, the engine will do nothing. Just so is it with the heart in religion. Unless the heart is lighted with fire from on high, the soul will not move.

Would you know the reason why such multitudes around you take no interest in true religion? They have no real concern about God, or Christ, or the Bible, or heaven, or hell, or judgment, or eternity. They care for nothing but what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or what they shall put on, or what money they can get, or what pleasure they can have. It is their heart which is in fault! They have not the least appetite for the things of God. They are destitute of any taste or inclination for spiritual things. They need a new mainspring. They need a new heart. "Therefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he has no heart unto it." (Prov. 17:16.)

Would you know the reason why so many hear the Gospel year after year, and yet remain unmoved by it? Their minds seem like Bunyan's "slough of despond." Cartloads of good instruction are poured into them without producing any good effect. Their reason is convinced. Their head assents to the truth. Their conscience is sometimes pricked. Their feelings are sometimes roused. Why then do they stick fast? Why do they tarry? It is their hearts which are in fault! Some secret idol chains them down to the earth, and keeps them tied hand and foot, so that they cannot move. They need a new heart. Their picture is drawn faithfully by Ezekiel, "They sit before you as my people, and they hear your words—but they will not do them—for with their mouth they show much love—but their heart goes after their covetousness." (Ezek. 33:31.)

Would you know the reason why thousands of so-called Christians will be lost at last, and perish miserably in hell? They will not be able to say that God did not offer salvation to them. They will not be able to plead that Christ did not send them invitations. Oh no! They will be obliged to confess that "all things were ready" for them, except their own hearts. Their own hearts will prove to have been the cause of their ruin! The life-boat was alongside the wreck—but they would not enter it. Christ "would" have gathered them—but they "would not" be gathered. (Matt. 23:37.) Christ would have saved t

hem—but they would not be saved. "They loved darkness more than light." Their hearts were in fault. "They would not come to Christ, that they might have life." (John 3:19; 5:40.)

I leave this branch of my subject. I trust I have said enough to show you the immense importance of the heart in religion. Surely I have good reason for pressing the subject of this paper on your notice. Is your heart right? Is it right in the sight of God?

II. I will now show you, in the second place, the heart that is **WRONG** in the sight of God. There are only two sorts of hearts, a right one and a wrong one. What is a wrong heart like?

The wrong heart is the natural heart with which we are all born. There are no hearts which are right by nature. There are no such things as naturally "good hearts," whatever some ignorant people may please to say about "having a good heart at the bottom." Ever since Adam and Eve fell, and sin entered into the world, men and women are born with an inclination to evil. Every natural heart is wrong. If your heart has never been changed by the Holy Spirit since you were born, know this day, that your heart is wrong.

What does the Scripture say about the natural heart? It says many things which are deeply solemn, and painfully true. It says that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. 17:9.) It says that "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5.) It says that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil." (Eccles. 9:3.) It says that "From within, out of the heart of man," as out of a fountain, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within." (Mark 7:21.) Truly this is a humbling picture! The seeds of these things are in the heart of everyone born into the world. Surely I may well tell you that the natural heart is wrong.

But is there no one common mark of the wrong heart, which is to be seen in all whom God has not changed? Yes! there is; and to that common mark of the wrong heart I now request your attention. There is a most striking and instructive figure of speech, which the Holy Spirit has thought fit to use, in describing the natural heart. He calls it a "stony heart." (Ezek. 11:19.) I know no emblem in the Bible so full of instruction, and so apt and fitting as this one. A truer word was never written than that which calls the natural heart a heart of stone. Mark well what I am going to say; and may the Lord give you understanding!

(a) A stone is **HARD**. All people know that. It is unyielding, unbending, unimpressible. It may be broken—but it will never bend. The proverb is world-wide, "as hard as a stone." Look at the granite rocks which line the coast of Cornwall. For our thousand years the waves of the Atlantic Ocean have dashed against them in vain. There they stand in their old hardness, unbroken and unmoved. It is just the same with the natural heart. Afflictions, mercies, losses, crosses, sermons, counsels, books, tracts, speaking, writing—all, all are unable to soften it. Until the day that God comes down to change it, it remains unmoved. Well may the natural heart be called a heart of stone!

(b) A stone is **COLD**. There is a chilly, icy feeling about it, which you know the moment you touch it. It is utterly unlike the feeling of flesh, or wood, or even earth. The proverb is in everyone's mouth, "As cold as a stone." The old marble statues in many a cathedral church have heard the substance of thousands of sermons. Yet they never show any feeling. Not a muscle of their marble faces ever shrinks or moves. It is just the same with the natural heart. It is utterly destitute of spiritual feeling. It cares less for the story of Christ's death on the cross, than it does for the last new novel, or the last debate in Parliament, or the account of a railway accident, or a shipwreck, or an execution. Until God sends fire from heaven to warm it, the natural heart of man has no feeling about religion. Well may it be called a heart of stone!

(c) A stone is **BARREN**. You will reap no harvest off rocks of any description. You will never fill your barns with grain from the top of Snowdon or Ben Nevis. You will never reap wheat on granite, or slate, or on flint. You may get good crops on Norfolk sands, or Cambridgeshire fens, or Suffolk clay, by patience, labor, money, and good farming. But you will never get a crop worth a farthing off a stone. It is just the same with the natural heart. It is utterly barren of penitence, or faith, or love, or fear, or holiness, or humility. Until God breaks it up, and puts a new principle in it, it bears no fruit to God's praise. Well may the natural heart be called a heart of stone!

(d) A stone is **DEAD**. It neither sees, nor hears, nor moves, nor grows. Show it the glories of heaven, and it would not be pleased. Tell it of the fires of hell, and it would not be alarmed. Bid it flee from a roaring lion, or an earthquake, and it would not stir. The Bass Rock and Mount Blanc are just what they were 4000 years ago. They have seen kingdoms rise and fall, and they remain utterly unchanged. They are neither higher, nor broader, nor larger than they were when Noah left

t the ark. It is just the same with the natural heart. It has not a spark of spiritual life about it. Until God plants the Holy Spirit in it, it is dead and motionless about real religion. Well may the natural heart be called a heart of stone!

The wrong heart is now set before you. Look at it. Think about it. Examine yourself by the light of the picture I have drawn. Perhaps your heart has never yet been changed. Perhaps your heart is still just as it was when you were born. If so, remember this day what I tell you. Your heart is wrong in the sight of God!

Would you know the reason why it is so difficult to do good in the world? Would you know why so few believe the Gospel, and live like true Christians? The reason is, the hardness of man's natural heart. He neither sees nor knows what is for his good. The wonder, to my mind, is not so much that few are converted, as the miraculous fact that any are converted at all. I am not greatly surprised when I see or hear of unbelief. I remember the natural heart is wrong.

Would you know the reason why the state of people is so desperately helpless, if they die in their sins? Would you know why ministers feel so fearful about everyone who is cut off unprepared to meet God? The reason is, the hardness of man's natural heart. What would a man do in heaven, if he got there, with his heart unchanged? By which of the saints would he sit down? What pleasure could he take in God's presence and company? Oh no! it is vain to conceal it. There can be no real hope about a man's condition, if he dies with his heart wrong.

I leave this point here. Once more I press the whole subject of my paper upon your conscience. Surely you must allow it is a very serious one. Is your heart right? Is it right in the sight of God?

III. I will now show you, in the last place, the right heart. It is a heart of which the Bible contains many pictures. I am going to try to place some of those pictures before you. On a question like this, I want you to observe what God says, rather than what is said by man. Come, now, and see the marks and signs of a right heart.

(a) The right heart is a "NEW heart." (Ezek. 36:26.) It is not the heart with which a man is born—but another heart put in him by the Holy Spirit. It is a heart which has new tastes, new joys, new sorrows, new desires, new hopes, new fears, new likes, new dislikes. It has new views about the soul, and sin, and God, and Christ, and salvation, and the Bible, and prayer, and heaven, and hell, and the world, and holiness. It is like a farm with a new and good tenant. "Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.)

(b) The right heart is a "BROKEN and CONTRITE heart." (Psalm 51:17.) It is broken off from pride, self-conceit, and self-righteousness. Its former high thoughts of self are cracked, shattered, and shivered to atoms. It thinks itself guilty, unworthy, and corrupt. Its former stubbornness, heaviness, and insensibility have thawed, disappeared, and passed away. It no longer thinks lightly of offending God. It is tender, sensitive, and jealously fearful of running into sin. (2 Kings 22:19.) It is humble, lowly, and self-abased, and sees in itself no good thing.

(c) A right heart is a heart which BELIEVES on Christ alone for salvation, and in which Christ dwells by faith. (Rom. 10:10; Eph. 3:17.) It rests all its hopes of pardon and eternal life on Christ's atonement, Christ's mediation, and Christ's intercession. It is sprinkled in Christ's blood from an evil conscience. (Heb. 10:22.) It turns to Christ as the compass-needle turns to the north. It looks to Christ for daily peace, mercy, and grace—as the sun-flower looks to the sun. It feeds on Christ for its daily sustenance, as Israel fed on the manna in the wilderness. It sees in Christ a special fitness to supply all its needs and requirements. It leans on Him, hangs on Him, builds on Him, cleaves to Him, as its physician, guardian, husband, and friend.

(d) A right heart is a PURIFIED heart. (Acts 15:9; Matt. 5:8) It loves holiness, and hates sin. It strives daily to cleanse itself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. (2 Cor. 7:1.) It abhors that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good. It delights in the law of God, and has that law engraved on it, that it may not forget it. (Psalm 119:11.) It longs to keep the law more perfectly, and takes pleasure in those who love the law. It loves God and man. Its affections are set on things above. It never feels so light and happy as when it is most holy; and it looks forward to heaven with joy, as the place where perfect holiness will at length be attained.

(e) A right heart is a PRAYING heart. It has within it "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father." (Rom. 8:15.) It is a daily feeling is, "Your face, Lord, will I seek." (Psalm 27:8.) It is drawn by an habitual inclination to speak to God about spiritual things—weakly, feebly, and imperfectly perhaps—but speak it must. It finds it necessary to pour out itself before God, as before a friend, and to spread before Him all its needs and desires. It tells Him all its secrets. It keeps back nothing from Him. You might as well try to persuade a man to live without breathing, as to persuade the possessor of a right

ght heart to live without praying.

(f) A right heart is a heart that feels within a CONFLICT. (Gal. 5:17.) It finds within itself two opposing principles contending for the mastery—the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. It knows by experience what Paul means when he says, "I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." (Rom. 7:23.) The wrong heart knows nothing of this strife. The strong man armed keeps the wrong heart as his palace, and his goods are at peace. (Luke 11:21.) But when the rightful King takes possession of the heart, a struggle begins which never ends until death. The right heart may be known by its warfare, quite as much as by its peace.

(g) Last—but not least, the right heart is HONEST, and SINGLE, and TRUE. (Luke 8:15; 1 Chron. 12:33; Heb. 10:22.) There is nothing about it of falsehood, hypocrisy, or image-acting. It is not double or divided. It really is what it professes to be, feels what it professes to feel, and believes what it professes to believe. Its faith may be feeble. Its obedience may be very imperfect. But one thing will always distinguish the right heart. Its religion will be real, genuine, thorough, and sincere.

A heart such as that which I have now described, has always been the possession of all true Christians of every name, and nation, and people and tongue. They have differed from one another on many subjects—but they have all been of a "right heart." They have some of them fallen, for a season, like David and Peter—but their hearts have never entirely departed from the Lord. They have often proved themselves to be men and women laden with infirmities—but their hearts have been right in the sight of God. They have understood one another on earth. They have found that their experience was everywhere one and the same. They will understand each other even better in the world to come. All that have had "right hearts" upon earth, will find that they have one heart when they enter heaven.

CONCLUSION

(1) I wish now in conclusion to offer to every reader of this paper, a QUESTION to promote self inquiry. I ask you plainly this day, "What is your heart? Is your heart right or wrong?"

I know not who you are into whose hands this paper have fallen. But I do know that self-examination cannot do you any harm. If your heart is right, it will be a comfort to know it. "If our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence towards God." (1 John 3:21.) But if your heart is wrong, it is high time to find it out, and seek a change. The time is short. The night comes when no man can work. Say to yourself this very day, "Is my heart right or wrong?"

Think not to say within yourself, "There is no need for such questions as these. There is no need to make such ado about the heart. I go to church or chapel regularly. I live a respectable life. I hope I shall prove right at last." Beware of such thoughts, I beseech you—beware of them if you would ever be saved. You may go to the best church on earth, and hear the best of preachers. You may be the best of churchmen, or the soundest member of a chapel. But all this time, if your heart is not right in the sight of God, you are on the high road to destruction. Settle down to quiet consideration of the question before you. Look it manfully in the face, and do not turn aside. Is your heart right or wrong?

Think not to say within yourself, "No one can know what his heart is. We must hope the best. No one can find out with any certainty the state of his own soul." Beware, I say again—beware of such thoughts. The thing can be known. The thing can be found out. Deal honestly and fairly with yourself. Set up a 'trial' on the state of your inward man. Summon a jury. Let the Bible preside as judge. Bring up the witnesses. Inquire what your tastes are—where your affections are placed—where your treasure is—what you hate most—what you love most—what pleases you most—what grieves you most. Inquire into all those points impartially, and mark what the answers are. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.) A tree may always be known by its fruit, and a true Christian may always be discovered by his habits, tastes, and affections. Yes! you may soon find out what your heart is, if you are honest, sincere, and impartial. Is it right or wrong?

Think not to say within yourself, "I quite approve of all you say, and hope to examine the state of my heart some day. But I have no time just at present. I cannot find leisure. I wait for a convenient season." Oh, beware of such thoughts—again I say beware! Life is uncertain, and yet you talk of "a convenient season." (Acts 24:25.) Eternity is close at hand, and yet you talk of putting off preparation to meet God. Alas, that habit of putting off is the everlasting ruin of millions of souls! Wretched man that you are! Who shall deliver you from this devil of putting off? Awake to a sense of duty. Throw off the chains that pride, and laziness, and love of the world are weaving round you. Arise and stand upon your feet, and look steadily at the question before you. Churchman or dissenter, I ask you this day—Is your heart right or wrong?

(2) I wish, in the next place, to offer a SOLEMN WARNING to all who know their hearts are wrong—but have no desire to change. I do it with every feeling of kindness and affection. I have no wish to excite needless fears. But I know not how to exaggerate the danger of your condition. I warn you that if your heart is wrong in the sight of God, you are hanging over the brink of hell! There is but a step between you and everlasting death!

Can you really suppose that any man or woman will ever enter heaven without a right heart? Do you flatter yourself that any unconverted person will ever be saved? Away with such a miserable delusion! Cast it from you at once and forever. What says the Scripture? "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall never see the kingdom of heaven." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (John 3:3; Matt. 18:3; Heb. 12:14.) It is not enough to have our sins pardoned, as many seem to suppose. There is another thing needed as well as a pardon, and that thing is a new heart. We must have the Holy Spirit to renew us, as well as Christ's blood to wash us. Both renewing and washing are needful before anyone can be saved.

Can you suppose for a moment, that you would be happy in heaven, if you entered heaven without a right heart? Away with the miserable delusion! Cast it from you at once and forever! You must have a "fitness for the inheritance of the saints," before you can enjoy it. (Coloss. 1:12.) Your tastes must be tuned and brought into harmony with those of saints and angels, before you can delight in their company. A sheep is not happy when it is thrown into the water. A fish is not happy when it is cast on dry land. And men and women would not be happy in heaven, if they entered heaven without right hearts.

My warning is before you. Harden not your heart against it. Believe it. Act upon it. Turn it to account. Awake and arise to newness of life without delay. One thing is very certain. Whether you hear the warning or not, God will not go back from what He has said. "If we believe not, He abides faithful—He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. 2:13.)

(3) I wish, thirdly, to offer COUNSEL to all who know their hearts are wrong—but desire to have them made right. That counsel is short and simple. I advise you to apply at once to the Lord Jesus Christ, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Entreat Him, as a lost and ruined sinner, to receive you, and supply the needs of your soul. I know well that you cannot make your own heart right. But I know that the Lord Jesus Christ can. And to the Lord Jesus Christ I entreat you to apply without delay.

If any reader of this paper really wants a right heart, I thank God that I can give him good encouragement. I thank God that I can lift up Christ before you, and say boldly, Look at Christ—Seek Christ—Go to Christ. For what did that blessed Lord Jesus come into the world? For what did He give His precious body to be crucified? For what did He die and rise again? For what did He ascend up into heaven, and sit down at the right hand of God? For what did Christ do all this—but to provide complete salvation for poor sinners like you and me—salvation from the guilt of sin, and salvation from the power of sin, for all who believe! Oh, yes! Christ is no half Savior. He has "received gifts for men, even for the rebellious." (Psalm 68:18.) He waits to pour out the Spirit on all who will come to Him. Mercy and grace—pardon and a new heart, all this Jesus is ready to apply to you by His Spirit, if you will only come to Him. Then come—come without delay to Christ.

What is there that Christ cannot do? He can create. By Him were all things made at the beginning. He called the whole world into being by His command. He can quicken. He raised the dead when He was on earth, and gave back life by a word. He can change. He has turned sickness into health, and weakness into strength—famine into plenty, storm into calm, and sorrow into joy. He has wrought thousands of miracles on hearts already. He turned Peter the unlearned fisherman into Peter the Apostle. He turned Matthew the covetous publican into Matthew the Gospel writer. He turned Saul the self-righteous Pharisee into Paul the Evangelist of the world. What Christ has done once, Christ can do again. Christ and the Holy Spirit are always the same. There is nothing in your heart that the Lord Jesus cannot make right. Only come to Christ.

If you had lived in Palestine, in the days when Jesus was upon earth, you would have sought Christ's help if you had been sick. If you had been crushed down by heart-disease in some back lane of Capernaum, or in some cottage by the blue waters of the sea of Galilee, you would surely have gone to Jesus for a cure. You would have sat by the way-side day after day, waiting for His appearing. You would have sought Him, if He did not happen to come near your dwelling—and never rested until you found Him. Oh, why not do the same this very day for the sickness of your soul? Why not apply at once to the Great Physician in heaven, and ask Him to "take away the stony heart and give you a heart of flesh"? (Ezek. 11:19.) Once more I invite you. If you want a "right heart," do not waste time in trying to make it right by your own strength. It is far beyond your power to do it. Come to the great Physician of souls. Come at once to Jesus Christ.

(4) I wish, lastly, to offer an EXHORTATION to all whose hearts have been made right in the sight of God. I offer it as a word in season to all true Christians. Hear me, I say to every believing brother or sister. I speak especially to you.

Is your heart right? Then be thankful. Praise the Lord for His distinguishing mercy, in "calling you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9.) Think what you were by nature. Think what has been done for you by free undeserved grace. Your heart may not be all that it ought to be, nor yet all that you hope it will be. But at any rate your heart is not the old hard heart with which you were born. Surely the man whose heart is changed ought to be full of praise.

Is your heart right? Then be humble and watchful. You are not yet in heaven—but in the world. You are in the body. The devil is near you, and never sleeps. Oh, keep your heart with all diligence! Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation. Ask Christ Himself to keep your heart for you. Ask Him to dwell in it, and reign in it, and garrison it, and to put down every enemy under His feet. Give the keys of the citadel into the King's own hands, and leave them there. It is a weighty saying of Solomon, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool." (Prov. 28:26.)

Is your heart right? Then be hopeful about the hearts of other people. Who has made you to differ? Why should not anyone in the world be changed, when such a one as you has been made a new creature? Work on. Pray on. Speak on. Write on. Labor to do all the good you can to souls. Never despair of anyone being saved so long as he is alive. Surely the man who has been changed by grace ought to feel that there are no desperate cases. There are no hearts which it is impossible for Christ to cure.

Is your heart right? Then do not expect too much from it. Do not be surprised to find it weak and wayward, faint and unstable, often ready to doubt and fear. Your redemption is not complete until your Lord and Savior comes again. Your full salvation remains yet to be revealed. (Luke 21:28; 1 Pet. 1:5.) You cannot have two heavens—a heaven here and a heaven hereafter. Changed, renewed, converted, sanctified, as your heart is—you must never forget that it is a 'man's heart' after all—and the heart of a man living in the midst of a wicked world.

Finally, let me entreat all right-hearted readers to look onward and forward to the day of Christ's second coming. A time draws near when Satan shall be bound, and Christ's saints shall be changed—when sin shall no more vex us, and the sight of sinners shall no more sadden our minds—when believers shall at length attend on God without distraction, and love Him with a perfect heart. For that day let us wait, and watch, and pray. It cannot be very far off. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Surely if our hearts are right, we ought often to cry, "Come quickly—come Lord Jesus!"

Re: The Heart - J. C. Ryle - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2011/5/21 12:59

Psa 50:23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Re: The Heart - J. C. Ryle, on: 2011/5/22 16:25

I must say that this was a very good Ryle sermon you posted. Thanks for putting it up!

Quote:
-----The heart is what the husband desires to have in his wife, the parent in his child, and the master in his servant. And the heart is what God desires to have in professing Christians.

Exactly that!

And the following was a great quote as well.

Quote:
-----The right heart may be known by its warfare, quite as much as by its peace.

OJ

Re: The Heart - J. C. Ryle - posted by StarofG0D (), on: 2011/5/22 23:37

Quote:

-----The right heart may be known by its warfare, quite as much as by its peace.

Thank you brother for posting this quote. I did not see it before.

Quote:

----- (f) A right heart is a heart that feels within a CONFLICT. (Gal. 5:17.) It finds within itself two opposing principles contending for the mastery—the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. It knows by experience what Paul means when he says, "I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." (Rom. 7:23.) The wrong heart knows nothing of this strife. The strong man armed keeps the wrong heart as his palace, and his goods are at peace. (Luke 11:21.) But when the rightful King takes possession of the heart, a struggle begins which never ends until death. The right heart may be known by its warfare, quite as much as by its peace.

There is a quote by Basilea Schlink that I think of often. "Sometimes you have to wrestle to pray, and some times pray to wrestle." There is something within all of us that longs to be broken. To finally be done with self! I think this is the wrestling, that we do, that we long for God's blessing upon us. And then we are able to more fully pray His will and wrestle the things that He is wanting us to wrestle with. "Our battle is not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. "

Like Jacob that wrestled with the angel. He so much wanted God's blessing that he was willing to wrestle and wrestle for this longed for brokenness. In scripture, it doesn't seem like he wrestled for just a few short minutes, but for what seemed like possible hours.

Shepherd Divine, our wants relieve
In this and every day;
To all Thy tempted followers give
The power, to watch and pray.
The spirit of interceding grace
Give us the faith to claim;
To wrestle till we see Thy face
And know Thy hidden Name.
-The Kneeling Christian

Re: , on: 2011/5/23 1:10

Or as another has said, "Whence cometh this war in my heart?"

Things were all La-dee-dah, until we were saved, but then once saved there seemed to come a war over almost everything we think/say/do.

It is truly amazing....

OJ

Re: - posted by StarofG0D (), on: 2011/5/23 10:30

When we were unsaved, we were always losing the battle. Hence the reason for no battle. We were already defeated, in despair without hope. Only shame and guilt winning us over. There was no grace involved.

Quote:

-----It is truly amazing....

Amen to this..