

Articles and Sermons :: Water The Roots! by J.R. Miller

Water The Roots! by J.R. Miller - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2019/12/17 20:35

In these days of bustling Christian activities, is there not danger that we neglect the culture of our hearts? And is there not danger that many who are absorbed in acts of benevolence may forget to look after their own souls? Is there not the same danger in the life of every Christian pastor and Christian worker? Is not the tendency of these days, even in the church, toward the cultivation of a working religion — oftentimes to the neglect of deep heart piety?

I have not one word to say against Christian activity. No one can do too much. But efficient activity can spring only from deep heart religion. First, sit at Jesus's feet, and then ministry will follow as naturally as the harvest follows the sowing.

The Example of Christ and Others

The Redeemer's own life was an example for our imitation, and never was there such a worker as He. All His energies were given out in unceasing activities. But His life had a root. He spent hours, oftentimes whole nights, in prayer. He was always full of the Holy Spirit, and went ever from silent and deep communion to his toils among men.

And the same is true of all the truly great workers who have ever toiled in the church. They took care of their own souls as the best and only true preparation for caring for the souls of others. Their grand developments of Christian energy were the regular outgrowths of fervent piety. They took root downwards and bore fruit upwards. And so it must ever be. Efficient, continued, and fruitful activity can result only from a life that is hidden with Christ in God.

What the church needs then, today, is not less Christian energy and activity, it needs more. But that it may have more, it must first have more heart-life. A Christian life can only be luxuriant and fruitful when its roots grow in a deep soil, and receive plentiful showers of spiritual influence.

And it is in the prayer closet that the roots of Christian life grow. If there is no secret prayer, no silent communion, no personal living with God, then there can be no genuine fruits of the Spirit.

The Significance of Roots

In many ways, the root is the most important part of the tree. Men do not see it. It is hidden under the ground. It gets no praise from men. Yet in the dark it works in silence and in its secret laboratory it generates the life which goes up into the tree, and which manifests itself in trunk and branches, in foliage and fruits. The leaves are woven down in the dark earth-factory. The colors that tint the flowers are prepared down in that lowly workshop. The little blocks that are piled in silence, one by one, as the beautiful fabric of the tree goes up, are hewn out in the secret quarries of the roots. The fruits which every year hang in rich clusters on the branches, draw all their richness and lusciousness from the roots. And if a tree droops and languishes, he who would revive it must look to the roots.

In the same way, these analogies hold true in the spiritual life. A man's secret and personal religious life is not that which the world sees, and praises, and understands; nor is it that which directly blesses and benefits the world. It is not a man's prayer closet which is to be set upon a hill. But that there may be a beautiful, luxuriant and fruitful life in the sight of the world, there must be a secret, hidden root-life to nourish this visible growth. That a man may be active and useful as a Christian worker, he must first be wrought upon by the Divine Spirit.

A Vital Balance

Every active Christian life must have, therefore, for its counterpart, a close personal walk with God. The energy of the one, must be balanced by the intenseness of the other. The danger is not that we work too much, but that we pray too little. It is to be feared that we have too many deserted or rarely frequented closets. We take too little time for quiet, solitary communion with God. When we are hurried with duties, then we take still less time for secret devotion. Our activity entrenches upon our communion. Our work takes us away from our waiting.

It is right to give, but we must first receive from God, or how can we give? We must not go out to starving souls with an empty basket; we must wait at Jesus's feet, until He fills our hands with bread.

We are so cumbered with much serving that we have no time with Mary, to sit down to silent meditation. In our hurry for results, we do not give God time to bring the fruits to perfection in our lives. We pluck them while green and unripe, and think to feed men with them thus. If we would be busy Marthas, then we must first be waiting Marys. We must receive at God's hand before we distribute to the multitude.

Let us, then, see to it that our own souls are fed before we seek to feed others. Let us build our prayer closets close to our pulpits and our fields of labor. Let us see that the roots are watered and then we shall be fruitful trees indeed, our branches hanging full, and covered with beauty!

Re: Water The Roots! by J.R. Miller - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/12/17 21:13

AMEN!!

Very good exhortation and a timely one at that :))

Thank you for sharing ~