

Articles and Sermons :: "Instant Christianity" -Tozer

"Instant Christianity" -Tozer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/6/25 17:33

"Instant Christianity"

It is hardly a matter of wonder that the country that gave the world instant tea and instant coffee should be the one to give it instant Christianity. If these two beverages were not actually invented in the United States it was certainly here that they received the advertising impetus that has made them known to most of the civilized world. And it cannot be denied that it was American Fundamentalism that brought instant Christianity to the gospel churches.

Ignoring for the moment Romanism, and Liberalism in its various disguises, and focusing our attention upon the great body of evangelical believers, we see at once how deeply the religion of Christ suffered in the house of its friends. The American genius for getting things done quickly and easily with little concern for quality or permanence has bred a virus that has infected the whole evangelical church in the United States and, through our literature, our evangelists and our missionaries, has spread all over the world.

Instant Christianity came in with the machine age. Men invented machines for two purposes. They wanted to get important work done more quickly and easily than they could do it by hand, and they wanted to get the work over with so they could give their time to other pursuits more to their liking, such as loafing or enjoying the pleasures of this world. Instant Christianity now serves the same purposes in religion. It disposes of the past, guarantees the future and sets the Christian free to follow the more refined lusts of the flesh in all good conscience and with a minimum of restraint.

By "instant Christianity" I mean the kind found almost everywhere in gospel circles and which is born of the notion that we may discharge our total obligation to our own souls by one act of faith, or at most by two, and be relieved thereafter of all anxiety about our spiritual condition. We are saints by calling, our teachers keep telling us, and we are permitted to infer from this that there is no reason to seek to be saints by character. An automatic, once-for-all quality is present that is completely out of more with the faith of the New Testament.

In this error, as in most others, there lies a certain amount of truth imperfectly understood. It is true that conversion to Christ may be and often is sudden. Where the burden of sin has been heavy, the sense of forgiveness is usually clear and joyful. The delight experienced in forgiveness is equal to the degree of moral repugnance felt in repentance. The true Christian has met God. He knows he has eternal life and he is likely to know where and when he received it.

But the trouble is that we tend to put our trust in our experiences and as a consequence misread the entire New Testament. We are constantly exhorted to make the decision, to settle the matter now, to get the whole thing taken care of at once - and those who exhort us are right in doing so. There are decisions that can be and should be made once for all. There are personal matters that can be settled instantaneously by a determined act of the will in response to Bible-grounded faith.

Instant Christianity tends to make the faith act the terminal (end) and so smother the desire for spiritual advance. It fails to understand the true nature of the Christian life, which is not static but dynamic and expanding.

By trying to pack all of salvation into one experience, or two, the advocates of instant Christianity flaunt the law of development which runs through all nature. They ignore the sanctifying effects of suffering, cross carrying, and practical obedience. They pass by the need for spiritual training, the necessity of forming right religious habits and the need to wrestle against the world, the devil and the flesh.

Re: "Instant Christianity" -Tozer - posted by npautsky (), on: 2006/6/25 22:45

Quote:
-----They pass by the need for spiritual training, the necessity of forming right religious habits **and the need to wrestle against the world, the devil and the flesh.**

If I were the devil and I had the opportunity to introduce doctrines into the Church of Jesus Christ, I can assure you that one of the first things that I would do would be to introduce a doctrine that reassures God's people that there is no need to struggle against the world, the flesh or the devil. What more could the devil ask for than for an enemy who somehow believes that it is wrong to struggle against him? I believe that is in fact what the devil has succeeded in doing to quite an extent. In one of Mr. Tozer's recordings he says in reference to a false teaching "If you sniff that for a minute you can tell where it came from, it still smells like brimstone".

Re: "Instant Christianity" -Tozer - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/6/26 8:57

Quote:
-----Instant Christianity came in with the machine age. Men invented machines for two purposes. They wanted to get important work done more quickly and easily than they could do it by hand, and they wanted to get the work over with so they could give their time to other pursuits more to their liking, such as loafing or enjoying the pleasures of this world. Instant Christianity now serves the same purposes in religion. It disposes of the past, guarantees the future and sets the Christian free to follow the more refined lusts of the flesh in all good conscience and with a minimum of restraint.

It is quotes like these that likely caused folk to view A.W. Tozer as a 20th Century prophet. This is what we see today, folk always in a hurry to get through spiritual things. Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up. There is often a feeling to get things over with so everyone can leave.

There is a church in our area that I'm told has a sign out front with the saying, "Home of the 15 minute sermon." This is folk going to church just so they can say they went. How is it that a person can spend hours doing vain things or entertaining themselves and suddenly when it comes to God we have to 'mechanize' the experience to expedite the process?