

**Articles and Sermons :: Are we Christians? Or are we worldlings? Bonar****Are we Christians? Or are we worldlings? Bonar - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/26 15:00**

Are we Christians? Or are we worldlings?

(Horatius Bonar, "Self-Denial Christianity")

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!"

Amos 6:1

What do we say to . . .

our self-indulgence,
our sloth,
our love of ease,
our avoidance of hardship,
our luxury,
our pampering of the body,
our costly feasts,
our silken couches,
our brilliant furniture,
our gay attire,
our braided hair,
our jeweled fingers,
our idle mirth,
our voluptuous music,
our jovial tables, loaded with every variety of rich viands?

Are we Christians? Or are we worldlings?

Where is the self-denial of the New Testament days?

Where is the separation from a self-pleasing luxurious world? Where is the cross, the true badge of discipleship, to be seen--except in useless religious ornaments for the body, or worse than useless decorations for the sanctuary?

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" Is not this the description of multitudes who name the name of Christ? They may not always be "living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry." But even where these are absent, there is 'high living'--luxury of the table or the wardrobe--in conformity to 'this present evil world.'

'At ease in Zion!' Yes! there is the shrinking . . .

from hard service;
from 'spending and being spent';
from toil and burden-bearing and conflict;
from self-sacrifice and noble adventure,
for the Master's sake.

There is conformity to the world, instead of conformity to Christ! There is a laying down, instead of a taking up of the cross. Or there is a lining of the cross with velvet, lest it should gall our shoulders as we carry it! Or there

is an adorning of the cross, that it may suite the taste and the manners of our refined and intellectual age.

Anything but the bare, rugged and simple cross!

We think that we can make the strait gate wider, and the narrow way broader, so as to be able to walk more comfortably to the heavenly kingdom. We try to prove that 'modern enlightenment' has so elevated the race, that there is no longer the battle or the burden or the discipline; or has so refined 'the world and its pleasures', that we may safely drink the poisoned cup, and give ourselves up to the inebriation of the Siren song.

'At ease in Zion!' Even when the walls of our city are besieged, and the citadel is being stormed! Instead of grasping our weapons, we lie down upon our couches!

Instead of the armor, we put on the silken robe!

We are cowards, when we should be brave!

We are faint-hearted, when we should be bold!

We are lukewarm, when we should be fervent!

We are cold, when we should be full of zeal!

We compromise and shuffle and apologize, when we should lift up our voice like a trumpet! We pare down truth, or palliate error, or extenuate sin--in order to placate the world, or suit the spirit of the age, or 'unify' the Church.

Learn self-denying Christianity. Not the form or name, but the living thing. Let us renounce the lazy, luxurious, self-pleasing, fashionable religion of the present day!

A self-indulgent religion has nothing in common with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; or with that cross of ours which He has commanded us to take up and carry after Him--renouncing ease and denying self.

Our time,
our gifts,
our money,
our strength,
are all to be laid upon the altar.

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" Amos 6:1