

General Topics :: Mental Assent**Mental Assent - posted by Consuming7, on: 2008/12/26 13:09**

Its my question - has anyone the meaning to mental assent and its place in the church? I have heard it brought up, and uneasy about it.

Re: Mental Assent, on: 2008/12/26 15:47

Hi

As a former Catholic, I gave mental assent to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for my sins. I readilly believed that in my head. The fact was, I did not know Him. Its not the knowing about Him or the giving mental assent t o abstract truths that save a man, its about actually "knowing," Him. Trusting Him completely and surrendering my whole life to Him. This is a work of the heart, not of the head. You cannot know Jesus through your intellect, no more than you can know Napoleon. One is dead, the other is alive and must be met, this is a meeting of the heart.....Frank

Re: Mental Assent - posted by boG (), on: 2008/12/26 20:32

Well said, brother Frank. If I may also mention, more precisely, it is when your head and your heart agree in the Spirit. That the mind be renewed by the word of God and the heart be humbled in fear by the lovingkindesses of God and these resting together with a cleansed conscience in the grace of the Holy Ghost.

That is to say, mental ascent is a form of man understanding the reasoning and verity of truth (**John 5:39-41**). Mental ascent cannot ascend up into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) nor can it descend into the abyss (that is, t o bring Christ up from the dead). Such wonders are beyond the mental faculties.

Jesus Christ is the Truth and "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." Therefore salvation is revelation: straight from the throne of Almighty God; born of the Spirit.

In regards to salvation, mental ascent is born of the flesh and profits nothing but pride. In regards to holiness (sanctification), mental ascent as guided, instructed, and sanctified by the the Holy Spirit is weighted in eternal glory. That is the beauty of Christianity, you don't have to leave your brain at the door, but none-the-less, do not lean on your own understanding.

Re: - posted by Consuming7, on: 2008/12/27 11:42

I'd like to thank you both for answering - it has help me in my search. Being not a learned man - many questions enter in concerning the truth of Gods Word. I too was looking concerning mental ascent - if in fact the word has roots in eastern mysticism (ex. Kun Fu or that stuff)

Re: Tomb - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/12/27 12:22

This is a good topic to talk about.

A very lamentable thing that has occured in recent history is the switch from the vital necessity of being born again to the useless substitute of mental assent. And not only is it a useless substitute - it is downright lethal as well. It is Satan's master design, I believe, to inveigle a person into rendering a mere mental assent to that which can only be wrought sovereignly by the Holy Spirit. The whole thing has its roots in the concept of what man can accomplish independant of God.

Institutions like the Roman Catholic Church thrive off the manifestation of this deception. The sacraments, confession, confirmation, baptism, first communion - these are all fulfilled by viture of a mental acquiescence on the part of the candidate. The goal is this: induction into the spiritual by an effort beginning in the carnal. Brethren, this is tantamount to shining a floodlight into the eyes of a corpse in the hopes of reversing death. Mental assent comes from the faculties of darkness, and it can never escape the realm of darkness where God has consigned it. Regardless of whatever ritual, emotional stimulus, enlightenment of intelligence, comprehension or concession, a corpse remains a corpse until Jesus says, "Come forth!"

Over the years, I have begun to understand why God provided so many accounts of people regaining eyesight in scriptu

re. Do a study of both the Old and New Testaments and you'll notice the absolute preponderance of this particular miracle - especially with our Lord and Paul. Even Jesus' fiercest opponents had to admit with chagrin: "Only God can restore sight to a person born blind!"

The trick the devil plays is to allow blind men the mental assent that they are no longer blind. When they answer psychologically to this cooing, they see manufactured light. The devil can also say "Come forth", but notice that he doesn't roll the stone away; Lazarus will indeed come forth, but he will never be loosed from the grave cloths and his "animated corpse" is forever left to wallow in darkness, in the decadence of the sealed tomb.

Brother Paul

Re: , on: 2008/12/27 14:37

Paul West writes...

"A very lamentable thing that has occurred in recent history is the switch from the vital necessity of being born again to the useless substitute of mental assent. And not only is it a useless substitute - it is downright lethal as well. It is Satan's master design, I believe, to inveigle a person into rendering a mere mental assent to that which can only be wrought sovereignly by the Holy Spirit. The whole thing has its roots in the concept of what man can accomplish independent of God. "

Amen brother, the only thing I might take issue with is the phrase "recent history."

I believe that this error came in almost right away after Luther and the Reformation, at least the next generation after him. Bonhoeffer writes in "The Cost of Discipleship,".....

The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call to discipleship is a gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from the grace. But those who try and use this grace as a dispensation from following Christ are simply deceiving themselves. But we ask, did not Luther himself come perilously near to this perversion in the understanding of grace? What about *Pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide et grande in Christo* (Sin boldly but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still) You are a sinner, anyway, and there is nothing you can do about it. Whether you are a monk or a man of the world, a religious man or a bad one, you can never escape the toils of the world or sin. So, put a bold face on it, and all the more because you can rely on the opus operatum of grace. Is this the proclamation of cheap grace, naked and unashamed, the *carte blanche* for sin, the end of all discipleship? Is this a blasphemous encouragement to sin boldly and rely on grace? Is there a more diabolical abuse of grace than to sin and rely on the grace which God has given?

If we are to understand this saying of Luther's, everything depends on applying the distinction between the data and the answer to the sum. If we make Luther's formula a premiss for our doctrine of grace, we are conjuring up a spectre of cheap grace. But Luther's formula is meant to be taken, not as the premiss, but as the conclusion, the answer to the sum, the coping stone, his very last word on the subject. Taken as the premiss, *pecca fortiter* acquires the character of the ethical principal, a principal of grace to which the principal of *pecca fortiter* must correspond. That means the justification of sin, and it turns Luther's formula into the very opposite. For Luther "sin boldly," could only be his very last refuge, the consolation for one whose attempts to follow Christ had taught him that he can never become sinless, who in his fear of sin despairs of the grace of God. As Luther saw it, "sin boldly," did not happen to be a fundamental acknowledgement of his disobedient life; it was the gospel of the grace of God before which are always and in every circumstance sinners. Yet this grace seeks us and justifies, sinners though we are. Take courage and confess your sin, says Luther, do not try and run away from it, but believe more boldly still. You are a sinner, so be a sinner, and don't try to become what you are not. Yes, and become a sinner again and again every day, and be bold about it. But to whom can such words be addressed, except to those who from the bottom of their hearts make a daily renunciation of sin and every barrier which hinders them from following Christ, but who, nevertheless are troubled by their daily faithlessness and sin. Who can hear these words without endangering his faith but he who hears the consolation as a renewed summons to follow Christ? Interpreted in this way, these words of Luther become a testimony to the costliness of grace, the only genuine kind of grace there is. Grace interpreted as a principal, *pecca fortiter* as a principal of grace at a low cost, is in the last resort simply a new law, which brings neither help nor freedom. Grace, as a living word, *pecca fortiter* as our comfort in tribulation and as a summons to discipleship, costly grace is the only pure grace, which really forgives sin and gives freedom to the sinner. We Lut

herans have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ."

I think Bonhoeffer brilliantly peels back what has happened to the Protestant reformation. Very soon after the Reformation, the formula itself was given mental assent and in this mental assent one was "saved." Yet, by merely giving mental assent to a few sentences, can that possibly save? No, and it did not and does not. So how is it that it can have went unnoticed for so long. Most have hidden (admittedly unknowingly) in Romans chapter 7. To me, there are three broad categories of people that can be found dwelling in the world of Romans 7, the world of "oh wretched man that I am." First there is the man who gave a mere mental assent to abstract truth and is still dead in his sins but does not know it and believes he is having a Romans 7 experience. This man never lost his life for the sake of Christ, was not willing to give up every thing. Second group is the genuine Christian who has taken up camp in Romans 7 and feels safer in his prison of sin, does not reckon himself to be free and looks to himself rather than Christ for his strength(began in the Spirit and is now attempting to finish in the flesh)When he looks at himself he only sees his sin. Third group, the Christian that is passing through and onto Romans 8. He has struggled with his sin and thrashed and thrashed and is now about to reach desperation. He has rightly concluded that he has a sin nature and will eventually cry out"who will deliver me from this body of death?" This journey is vital for every Christian. For if we, at the beginning, have a head knowledge of the fact that we can never overcome sin, and therefore "sin boldly,' relying on grace, then that grace is cheap grace and no grace at all. But, if after having walked the narrow path we eventually come to the conclusion that we can never overcome sin, then we stop looking at ourselves and look to Jesus. It must be pointed out though, that when Paul is writing this, it is the writings of a man very sensitive to the Holy Spirit. What he describes in Romans 7 is not the path of a man who walked about sinning without a care. The only person who can discover the truth of Romans 8 is the man that has struggled and failed. And when I say struggled, I am not talking about people who are going about murdering or sleeping around or drunks or people who were still in bondage to the sins of their life before Christ, I am talking about the people who , in Christ, overcome all of that and yet still came to the conclusion of the end of Romans 7. To them, lies the glorious freedom of Romans 8 . And to them is still the requirement of "abiding continually.".....brother Frank

Re: Mental Assent - posted by Consuming7, on: 2008/12/27 22:38

Again - I would thank each who so far have given answers that witness in my spirit to be true. It is unknown to me as if this is a new thing that has entered the church, or a deception of the devil that has gone on for years. As for me, I'm Pentecostal (trinity) and have heard this spoken about, and for some reason does not set well in my spirit - or I find no peace in its concept(s).

Re: , on: 2008/12/28 0:57

I don't think it has much to do with the devil, rather men searching for the lowest common denominator. If one is in this category, then that one would not be seeking the presence of God. This intimacy, this presence is the key to all aspects of our Christianity. There is no difficulty in Christendom today that could not be resolved by the presence of God. That is why it all comes back to Calvary. Calvary is the expression of absolute Love, absolute surrender, absolute victory. It is the totality of the expression of God's love for the world. To understand the cross and its meaning more deeply is to know God more deeply. That can be said in reverse and have the exact same meaning. To know God more deeply is to understand the cross on a deeper level. The more you understand the cross, the deeper you "know," God, the less you care about yourself, your rights, your agenda and your circumstances. For on the cross we see the highest expression of "not my will but thine be done." To understand the cross more deeply is a revelation. To know God more deeply is a revelation, an encounter with the living God Himself. Revelation comes by the presence of God. Therefore all understanding of spiritual things comes by a revelation by the Holy Spirit, and can come no other way. It is impossible for the carnal mind to understand spiritual things. So, without a revelation, without an encounter, all we have is a head knowledge.....Frank