

ivals And Church History :: "The Betrayal Of The Ages", a documentary on the de-emphasis of the 'New Birth'

"The Betrayal Of The Ages", a documentary on the de-emphasis of the 'New Birth'. - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3

THE BETRAYAL OF THE AGES

Compiled By Robert Wurtz II

INTRODUCTION

In mid 2005 I had become quite burdened over the condition of modern evangelistic methods and the fading emphasis on the New Birth. I suppose you could say that the burden had come to a head. I had been flooding my study time with materials of Wesley, Finney, Ravinhill, Tozer, Moody, Billy Sunday and many others. I had gone to a course in 2004 by the Billy Graham Evangelistic association and was awarded a 'counselor' badge for the 2004 Kansas City crusade. The contrast between the things I learned in the classes and the studies I had made prior was shocking. I was unable to fully reconcile it in my heart. I knew we were on a horrible course of doom and destruction if someone did not do something.

So one morning I made a statement in the adult Sunday School class I had taught for over 10 years that would change my ministry forever. On teaching on salvation and the Gospel in a moment of great passion I said, "We have to get this! Because it had been a hundred years since a real Gospel has been really preached." I may as well have cursed. I can only describe the response as shock, awe, and anger. In retrospect I can say I may have understated the problem as I really now believe we have to go back to Finney to see where this train started coming off the rails. That would be over 150 years. The following presentation was my 'apologetic' to the statement. I will post it in several entries as I have opportunity.

I wish to discuss in the following article the development of modern evangelistic methodology through a compilation of a variety of related materials on the subject. I shall begin by discussing what I see as the root cause of our loss of focus on the genuine Born Again experience and trace the regression from the *anxious meeting* and *anxious seat* to 'the sinners' prayer'. By no means is this article exhaustive, but I wish to shed some light upon the issues for those who wish further study.

WHEN THE HEAD IS NO LONGER THE HEAD

TEXT: Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Revelation 2:1-5)

Though there would be a thousand promises in the New Testament it is certain that scarcely would a church dare claim the promise of Revelation 2:5, *or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* G. Campbell Morgan relates this passage to Paul's words of warning to the Corinthian church: "For I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. The elements of first love then are simplicity and purity. The love of the Church to Christ is typified by the love of the wife for the husband. What then is the love of Christ to the Church? Unselfish love, love in which there was no single thought of self. What then is the Church's love for Christ? The response of love to the mystery of love, the submission of love to perfect love. First love is the love of espousal. Its notes are simplicity, and purity, marital love, the response of love to love, the subjection of a great love to a great love, the submission of a self-denying love to a love that denies self. First love is the abandonment of all for a love that has abandoned all"

Re: "The Betrayal Of The Ages", a documentary on the de-emphasis of the 'New Birth' - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 9:2

LEAVING THE LOVE WE HAD AT FIRST (Part 2)

There was a time when Israel followed hard after God. They followed the cloud by day and the fire by night. Jeremiah reflects on these things and declared that God remembered the love of Israel's espousals, when she would follow him whithersoever he went. Here we read, *Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* (Jeremiah 2:2)

This is that "first love" experience- it is the love they had at first. Matthew Henry comments on this passage, "Those that begin well and promise fair, but do not perform and persevere, will justly be upbraided with their hopeful and promising beginnings. God remembers the kindness of our youth and the love of our espousals, the zeal we then seemed to have for him and the affection wherewith we made our covenants with him, the buds and blossoms that never came to perfection; and it is good for us to remember them, that we may remember whence we have fallen, and return to our first love."

Notice how this love is demonstrated, *when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* Following the pillar and cloud they often murmured and complained. Sometimes they desired to return to Egypt. Yet God in Jeremiah 2:2 recalls only the 'good times'. The times when Israel was following Him with all of their heart- like a young man and women in the love of their youth, longing for one another and burned in their hearts for one another. For Israel the la

nd was not sown. This is a land of barrenness. There was nothing of physical beauty to attract them to this land- for it was not the land that was beautiful, but the God they were following.

WHY DO WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW?

Satan in the book of Job leveled upon mankind the great indictment of the ages, Does Job fear God for nothing? (Job 1: 9b) In this one question Satan accused man of serving God only for what man could get out of the relationship. Job was exceedingly wealthy and prosperous. Satan accused Job of fearing God for gain. God allowed Satan to touch all but his life to prove that there is a people in the earth that serve God for God alone. They will follow Him whithersoever He goes no matter if He blesses them or not. If he takes their possessions, family, and even health they will still follow.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 9:43

I REMEMBER THEE... WHEN THOU WENTEST AFTER ME...

Christians in a first love relationship are like a young couple madly in love and content to live in poverty so long as they have each other. Satan challenged man's motive in serving God and essentially accuses man of marrying God for His wealth and blessing. Adam Clarke once said that those who marry for the money can be justly called adulterers so long as they live. This is a foundational truth when it comes to our relationship with God. Do you serve God for nothing or for what you can get out of the relationship? Would you follow God if it were only His person that He supplied? If you loved with the espousals of youth you would. And it is this type of love that Christ demands. If you are going to love God- you must love him for who He is and not what your going to get out of the relationship. *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown*... God calls to remembrance such a love. It is the 'first love', the love we had when we first followed Christ. The love that kept Christ on our hearts day and night- the love that burned with a holy zeal for His glory and a unquenchable hunger for His presence.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 9:51

RELIGION: "Worship in the absence of God."

The warning is stated clearly that if a church does not repent and turn to Christ in first love then He will remove their candlestick from its place. Here we have a picture of not a Menorah or 7 individual lamps on one stand, but seven individual lamp stands. Christ is walking in the midst of these lampstands trimming them as did the priests in the Temple. The churches of Asia were local churches. They were real churches in history.

Ephesus is a prime example of how it can appear that everything is going right- and yet the most critical element is gone. Ministry galore but no desire to pursue God. No real desire for His presence. They did not relish the GLORY of God. This is exactly where Israel failed in the wilderness. They committed to God, but did not to see the glory. They trembled and feared at it. They placed a vail over Moses face when it shone forth from him. And in so doing- God placed a vail over their hearts that is still there today. What is it? They wanted all the exercise of religion- but they didn't want God a part of it. It has been said that religion is worship in the absence of God. Man is a religious creature. But this cannot be confused with the relationship we have with God through the New Birth.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2006/3/3 10:39

Br Robert,

Every paragraph is pregnant with the Holy Spirit. I see that this may be the beginning of something God is working in you for which He has called you.

As time goes on, go back to each thought here and continue to unravel, or grow, according to Scripture the understanding that God gives you. He is teaching us to be fishermen.

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 11:18

THE OIL WE NEED

Jesus describes this phenomena in John 3, *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love d darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

The churches are the lampstands, but Christ is the light. The flame is fueled by the 'oil' (as it were) from the Holy Spirit- that is produced in our devotions with Him. Those times of crushing when we long after Him as the Deer panteth after the water brook- when we take time in His presence. When we search for Him in the pages of His Holy Word with ALL of our hearts. It is in those things that the 'oil' is worked in us, that we might have something to contribute to the gathering together of the Saints. In this model Christ is central and man is but the 'vessel' for what God is preparing. He pours from each one severally as He wills that costly fragrance into the gathering- that which He worked in us in our own personal relationship with Him.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 11:21

Quote:
-----As time goes on, go back to each thought here and continue to unravel, or grow, according to Scripture the understanding that God gives you. He is teaching us to be fishermen.

Thanks Bro. Jeff. These are really bits of info I have picked up here and there. Some of it I cite the source- other things are what the Lord has given me or what others have poured into me as they have shared what God was doing in them. Thank God for all that comes from Him. If something sounds familiar- remember- it is a compilation and not an original piece. ;-)

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2006/3/3 12:34

Br Robert wrote:

Quote:
-----f something sounds familiar- remember- it is a compilation and not an original piece.

Daniel was given a dream, that over time, God continued to bring clarity to. I see our lives as a "compilation." Likewise there here will always be a struggle to come to that understanding. I recognized that in your first paragraph.

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 13:17

SECTION II
MINISTRY APART FROM GOD

The twentieth century witnessed more changes upon the whole of human existence than any other century in human history. The nineteenth century laid the foundation for much of the change that we witnessed in the twentieth. Many inventions in science and industry coupled with the post modernism (secularism) in education came together to change the face of human existence, as it had been known for many thousands of years.

These changes permeated like a miasma through the whole fabric of society. Our great, great, great grandparents would

not recognize the world in which we live. It would not understand the technology and it certainly would not believe the morality.

We, on the other hand, only know *what we have experienced*. Things have changed very fast until each generation has experienced a radically different life than the one before.

Now take this back to the 1800's. Would you be shocked to think that Christianity could be as different today than the 1800's than any other facet of our existence? Is Christianity as different today (for example) as the school systems are different from the 1800's? What did schools in the 1800's teach? What about our laws? Is it possible that the message in the Sunday School class of 1900 is as different in 2005 as is the Elementary school class of 1900 compared to 2005? Do kids get a 'real education' these days?

It used to be the three 'R's', but look at today. Many kids struggle to read and few have the skills and desire to write quality works. The focus today is often far away from the three 'R's' of the past. As with many schools, so with many Sunday School's- there is a tendency to major on the minors.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 13:21

GEORGE BARNA'S SOBERING STATISTICS

Americans remain inclined toward spiritual matters and feel comfortable with their relationship with God and the clarity they have regarding their purpose in life. Despite that sense of security and discernment, only 5% of American adults possess a biblical worldview, and a minority believes in absolute moral truth. Using that framework, Barna discovered that the percentage of adults holding a biblical worldview has remained minimal and unchanged over the past three years, despite the widespread public debate about moral issues and the efforts of thousands of churches to enhance people's moral convictions. Currently, only 5% of adults have a biblical worldview. The percentage varies among faith groups. About half of all evangelicals have such a perspective. Overall, 8% of Protestants possess that view, compared to less than one-half of one percent of Catholics.

George Barna, whose acclaimed book *Think Like Jesus* described the core elements of a biblical worldview in laymen's terms, noted that the religious books of greatest influence in the past several years have not addressed people's fundamental theological views. "Most of the bestsellers have focused on meaning, purpose, security and the end times," the researcher pointed out. "While there have been theological views expressed in those books, very few popular books have helped people to think clearly and comprehensively about their core theology. Consequently, most born again Christians hold a confusing and inherently contradictory set of religious beliefs that go unchecked by the leaders and teachers of their faith community."

88% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THEY ARE RIGHT WITH GOD

Currently, nine out of ten adults (88%) feel "accepted by God." Barna listed a pair of interesting correlations related to that self-image. First, about one-third of the individuals who feel accepted by God do not consider themselves to be deeply spiritual. Second, people are twice as likely to feel accepted by God as they are to be born again—a condition that, many Protestant leaders argue, is a key reflection of God's forgiveness and ultimate acceptance.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 13:25

CHURCH SUCCESS MEASURED BY ATTENDANCE?

The survey outcomes compelled the survey's director, George Barna, to remind Christian leaders to stay focused on the things that matter. "Our studies consistently show that churches base their sense of success on indicators such as attendance, congregant satisfaction, dollars raised and built-out square footage. None of those factors relates to the kind of radical shift in thinking and behavior that Jesus Christ died on the cross to facilitate. As long as we measure success on the basis of popularity and efficiency, we will continue to see a nation filled with people who can recite Bible stories but fail to live according to Bible principles."

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 14:29

DEFINING THE BORN AGAIN PRE-1900 (GEORGE WHITFIELD)

FIRST, Let us consider what it is to live godly in Christ Jesus. This supposes, that we are made the righteousness of God in Christ, that we are born again, and are one with Christ by a living faith, and a vital union, even as Jesus Christ and the Father are One. Unless we are thus converted, and transformed by the renewing of our minds, we cannot properly be said to be in Christ, much less to live godly in him.

To be in Christ merely by baptism, and an outward profession, is not to be in Him in the strict sense of the word: no; "They that are in Christ, are new creatures; old things are passed away, and all things are become new" in their hearts. Their life is hid with Christ in God; their souls daily feed on the invisible realities of another world. To "live godly in Christ," is to make the divine will, and not our own, the sole principle of all our thoughts, words, and actions; so that, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God."

Those who live godly in Christ, may not so much be said to live, as Christ to live in them: He is their Alpha and Omega, their first and last, their beginning and end. They are led by his Spirit, as a child is led by the hand of its father; and are willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads them. They hear, know, and obey his voice. Their affections are set on things above; their hopes are full of immortality; their citizenship is in heaven.

Being born again of God, they habitually live to, and daily walk with, God. They are pure in heart; and, from a principle of faith in Christ, are holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

Re: - posted by My_Daughter, on: 2006/3/3 14:38

Quote:

88% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THEY ARE RIGHT WITH GOD

Currently, nine out of ten adults (88%) feel "accepted by God." Barna listed a pair of interesting correlations related to that self-image. First, about one-third of the individuals who feel accepted by God do not consider themselves to be deeply spiritual. Second, people are twice as likely to feel accepted by God as they are to be born again—a condition that, many Protestant leaders argue, is a key reflection of God's forgiveness and ultimate acceptance.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 14:44

ONE 'MAJOR' DIFFERENCE (Finney's progression to salvation)

Before 1900 Finney and others taught that there are three types of sinners; careless, awakened, and convicted. When God set about to awaken a sinner and they became deeply distressed and concerned for their soul, they were said to be in an 'anxious state'. They were called anxious sinners. They were careful to realize that anxious sinners were more in search of being comforted in their distress, than resolving the problem at hand (their rebellion against God). They knew that the LAST place that a sinner would seek for refuge would be Jesus Christ; but they were patient and flushing them to Him.

Other TERMS used by ministers BEFORE 1900 would include 'hopeful conversions'. Ministers did not refer to people being 'saved' but 'hopefully converted'. Ministers would not dare tell a person they were saved; they believed that to be the prerogative of the Holy Spirit. Therefore instead of saying 50 were 'saved' during the meeting, they would say 50 were hopefully converted.

As we will see later in our study, being considered 'hopefully converted' required a major transformation that was persuasive enough to be considered a change. George Whitfield once said that, "*the difference between the born again person and the person before the new birth, should be so radical, that it would appear to folk who lived with or around them that they had not seen him/her in 20 years.*"

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/3 16:06

STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT?

The messages preached included all the 'fine print' of the Gospel. Some ministers would spend weeks just explaining to the people what salvation from Sin really was. There was no such thing as expecting in one sermon to convert a sinner.

Another consideration is that there were only a handful of churches and ministers that can even be documented to make use of an 'altar call' before Charles Finney. Anxious sinners were counseled and prayed for after the meeting- in a separate meeting place. Sometimes they were after service, other times the meeting may be held the next day.

It was a common saying of Spurgeon that ministers ought to, "Strike when the iron is hot", even though some make cold iron hot by striking. However, some contend that Spurgeon also believed that if the iron was really hot of the Holy Spirit- it would still be hot in the morning. Not so if man make hot by striking.

In other words, the belief was, that the same God that was dealing in the service at night would still be dealing in the morning. If He was not- it was all emotion anyway. Sometimes the 'inquiry meetings' were from house to house. Depending on how large the house was or how many people attended- a separate meeting hall may need to be used.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 8:44

DO YOUR DUTY!

There is another phrase we need to learn if we are to understand pre-1900 Christianity and it is the word 'DUTY'. Finney made use of this word often. To "DO YOUR DUTY" is to cease from rebelling against your maker. It is to surrender ALL of yourself to God and forsake ALL of your known sin.

Many *anxious sinners* are under tremendous conviction, not because God is trying to 'chastise' them for their sin, but because it is the manifestation of the Spirit striving with them and their refusal to submit.

Some people in Finney's day would tell of having been under conviction for weeks, but that is only because they were in rebellion for weeks. It is your "DUTY" to submit to the Holy Spirit when He is striving and the sinner has no assurance whatsoever that the Spirit will strive for any extended period of time. It is the mercy of God alone that He is striving now.

One saying that was also used in the former days was that, "when God comes knocking for a sinner he has a pardon in the one hand and a sword in the other." He declares to the sinner; REPENT and be pardoned or rebel and PERISH! Not tomorrow, not next week, not next month or in a 'convenient season'. God declares NOW is the accepted time, behold TODAY is the day of salvation.

Some would so resist the Holy Ghost that they would come under great distress and folk would seek to comfort them. Charles Finney once told a group of folks, "The strivings of the Spirit to bring a person to Christ will never hurt them, nor drive them crazy. He may make himself deranged by resisting, but it is blasphemous to think that the benevolent, wise Spirit of God would ever behave with so little care as to make a person deranged and destroy the soul that He came to save and sanctify."

The only RELIEF for the sinner in the throes of conviction is to submit to God. And when the submission takes place, the same Holy Spirit that was convincing of Sin will bring the Joy of the Lord in its place.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/6 10:04

This is great stuff, brother. I appreciate you giving your time to put this together.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 10:39

PRAYING FROM YOUR OWN HEART

The difference that stands out in pre-1900 Gospel messages is that they were as *complete* as possible. When a person 'responded' in some way to the Gospel when they were 'anxious' or 'convicted' they were not told that they were 'saved' as a result. The so-called "sinners prayer" was way off the radar at this point- at least 50 years away. Keep in mind also that in most cases this prayer was used to lead a person to Christ on their deathbed.

Why was it not used pre-1900? The ministers simply understood that a person couldn't possibly *process through* what they are committing to while repeating a prayer. They did not have time to reflect and decide because the words were coming out one after the other. Moreover, the ministers did not lead them to say anything that did not come from their own hearts and if they did not understand things well enough to pray then they needed a lot more preaching and teaching before ever making any commitment.

Simply put, if they can't pray a prayer from their own heart; 1) The Holy Spirit was not leading them to conversion 2) The feelings expressed in the prayer are not their own.

This means that a sinner's prayer 'tells' a person what to feel rather than express a feeling that already exists in their own heart. They are told to say things like, "I am sorry for my sins"- but are they really sorry?

Imagine asking a person to repeat a prayer for healing by believing and trusting in Christ for that healing. In this model a person repeats a prayer for God to cure them of their disease. They are counseled that God heals and that His word is true. When they are finished repeating their prayer they are asked; did you mean that? Did you believe that God will heal you? If you did, God's word is true and you are NOW as healed as you will ever be. They then are so excited that they go to the DR. to get a report of confirmation. They boast to the DR that they had been told they were healed if they 'believed' and they did believe so they are there to get the proof of the healing. How will the Dr break the horrifying news that their cancer or heart problem is still there? What went wrong here? Answer that and you will have the solution to why the old timers did not use repeating prayers.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 10:41

Quote:

-----This is great stuff, brother. I appreciate you giving your time to put this together.

Thanks PreachParsley. Keep in mind the material is a compilation of resources and is NOT completely original. Just felt I need to keep saying that as not all sources are cited. I have a bibliography I will put on at the end. ;-)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 13:29

THE OPIATE OF FALSE ASSURANCE

Charles G. Finney's teaching "FALSE ASSURANCE FOR SINNERS" is considered by some to be the greatest teaching ever written on the topic of counseling 'anxious' sinners. In this he writes; "The very idea of anxiety implies to me instruction. A sinner would not be anxious at all about his future state, unless he had light enough to know that he is a sinner, and that he is in danger of punishment and needs forgiveness."

The word converted in the scripture means to 'turn' or 'return'. Hence the passage... *repent ye therefore and be*

converted that you sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19) The word repent also means to "change your mind". This change of mind comes in part as a result of folk opening their eyes, ears, and heart when the light of truth is poured upon them.

In Matthew 13:15 we read; *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* This is a glimpse of the process of a sinner coming to repentance and conversion. Notice, their eyes THEY have closed... This is rebellion against God manifested in willful ignorance. When the Holy Spirit seeks to illuminate their faculties through the word of God they come under great conviction (convincing) of Sin. This 'convincing' of sin brings to bear the truth that the sinner MUST turn from his/her wicked ways to Christ.

When a sinner is in anxiety and despair of mind for their soul- they are in a 'pain' of sorts. That pain makes them miserable and they seek for relief from the 'pain' (conviction). They want loosed of the symptoms of their problem. The *problem* is rebellion against God- the effects of that rebellion is conviction. For a Christian to offer false comfort to a sinner who will not repent is as cruel to the soul as a doctor prescribing his patient a pain killer instead of what he/she really needs, i.e. life-saving surgery or appropriate medication.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 14:34

FALSE COUNSEL TO SINNERS

Finney continues, "The fact is, the anxious sinner is seeking a hope, he is seeking pardon, and comfort, and deliverance from hell. He is anxiously looking for someone to comfort him, and make him feel better, without being obliged to conform to such humiliating conditions as those of the gospel. And his anxiety and distress continue, only because he will not yield to the terms. Unfortunately, anxious sinners find comforters enough to their liking. Miserable comforters they all are, too, "seeing in their answers there remaineth falsehood." No doubt, millions and millions are now in hell, because there were those around them who gave them false comfort, who had so much false pity, or were themselves so much in the dark, that they would not let them remain in anxiety till they had submitted their hearts to God, but administered falsehood, and relieved their distress in this way, and now their souls are lost."

I believe Finney is correct here. The time of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord when the person submits to God, not some assurance from man. Man cannot give another man an assurance, only God can do that. To 'assure' a person who is under conviction is to militate against the Holy Ghost. Only submission can bring assurance and that from God ALONE.

This submission will IMMEDIATELY begin relief of conviction of sin and will replace it with the joy and peace of God. So long as there is conviction- there MUST be rebellion. And when a sinner is in rebellion they cannot be converted to Christ. How can a person run from Christ and resist Him with all their might and be said to have 'changed their mind' and 'turned to Him'?

Many people get up from modern altars or pray salvation prayers in their seats only to have been numbed by a host of false elixirs and opiates to the feeling of conviction by FALSE ASSURANCES given them by well meaning Christians. What can be construed as good counsel to a sinner that does not involve submission to God? If a person does not respond 'rightly' to the light they have- transformation will not take place.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 15:02

UNDERMINING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE 'MOMENT'

What a devilish practice it is to make lite of the eternal things of God when the Holy Ghost is bringing a solemn subject to the minds of men! I recently heard of a preacher who was preaching on hell until all the service was solemn and the people in distress of mind for their souls. All at once, when the people had come under great conviction and strivings with the Holy Spirit the minister could take no more and in a most frivolous manor made a joke with a pregnant woman near the front row about the baby falling out while she was walking. Incredible! That a man would preach such a message and then feel the need to lighten the moment until sinners plunged into hell! Pitiful!

Finney comments on this behavior; *“Sometimes an awakened sinner is comforted by being told that religion does not consist in feeling bad. I once heard of a Doctor of Divinity, giving an anxious sinner such counsel, when he was actually writhing under the arrows of the Almighty. Said he, "Religion is cheerful, religion is not gloomy, do not be distressed, be comforted, dismiss your fears, you should not feel so bad," and such like miserable comforts, when, in fact, the man had in finite reason to be distressed, for he was resisting the Holy Ghost, and in danger of grieving him away for ever. It is true; religion does not consist in feeling bad. But the sinner has reason to be distressed, because he has no religion. If he had religion, he would not feel so. Were he a Christian, he would rejoice. But to tell an impenitent sinner to be cheerful! Why, you might as well preach this doctrine in hell, and tell them there, "Cheer up here, cheer up, do not feel so bad."*

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/6 15:41

Quote:

----- So long as there is conviction- there MUST be rebellion.

What would be a good definition of conviction? When God's holiness confronts man's sin and brings an uncomfortable feeling?

I know some people use the word conviction as something they strongly agree with.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 16:16

Hi PreachParsley,

Quote:

-----What would be a good definition of conviction? When God's holiness confronts man's sin and brings an uncomfortable feeling?

But I tell you the truth; it is better for you that I go away, for if I may not go away, the Comforter will not come unto you, and if I go on, I will send Him unto you; and having come, He will convict the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment; concerning sin indeed, because they do not believe in me; and concerning righteousness, because unto my Father I go away, and no more do ye behold me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world hath been judged. (John 16)

This is the operation of the Holy Spirit when He convinces us of our sin. It would hard for me to put a good definition on the concept, except to say, that I believe that the Holy Spirit takes on the role of our Lord in the earth to point out the *controversy(s)* that God has with the individual. For the rich young ruler it was his money and things, but it could be any number of things I suppose depending on the person. Our response is to *agree* with God and turn. When God says 'turn' we *can turn* and we must turn, because no word from God is without the power to do what we are commanded. If we are in prayer and the Lord is dealing with us about something and pressing us to forsake something (for example) it is our obligation to forsake it. This is a process of dealing with things throughout our Christian lives. But that 'process' has a starting point. A person who desires to please God will be obedient? Sometimes it is a very simple thing and other times it is not. Either way it is God working in us to will and do His good pleasure.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/6 16:51

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO GOD

One of Finney's writings on dealing with anxious sinners reads, *“The more experience I have, and the more I observe the ways in which even good people deal with anxious sinners, the more I feel grieved at the endless fooleries and falsehoods with which they attempt to comfort their anxious friends, and thus, in fact, deceive them and beguile them out of their salvation. It often reminds me of the manner in which people act when any one is sick. Let any one of you be sick, with almost any disease in the world, and you will find that every person you meet with has a remedy for that disorder, a certain cure, a specific, a panacea; and you will find such a world of quackery all around you, that if you do not take care*

and SHUT IT ALL OUT, you will certainly lose your life. A man must exercise his own judgment, for he will find as many remedies as he has friends, and each one is tenacious of his own medicine, and perhaps will think hard if it is not taken. And no doubt this miserable system of quackery kills a great many people.Â”

The answer to conviction is in submission to God's known will alone. Everyone has a well-intended solution. But God's word is the only remedy. They must submit on the point that God is demanding. False assurances and elixirs against their conscience and the Holy Ghost has not helped them, it has only eased their mind to the eventuality that they are on their way to hell with a counterfeit ticket to heaven. All the assurance really did was remove the conviction God was using to bring them to genuine regeneration and it greased their slide into hell. We must be very sensitive to the Holy Spirit in counseling folk in the throes of conviction.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/7 8:34

THE SEEDS OF MODERN EVANGELISTIC METHODS (Section 3)

NUMBERS NUMBERS NUMBERS

In the 1820's, Charles Finney, considered by many to be the "father of modern evangelism", used his so-called "new measures" that disturbed many pastors and created much opposition to the revivals. Many of these 'new measures' in one form or another are so 'a part' of modern evangelical Christendom that it will seem odd to the reader that these measures are in many cases less than 200 years old.

Until Finney popularized the 'new methods', conversions were considered a personal affair. Whitefield may have witnessed excited emotional outbursts of folk crying out in repentance during the meeting, but he would never have asked inquirers to sit on an "anxious bench", or pray publicly any type of repeated prayer as a sign of repentance.

Before Finney, people were presented with the truth, but were never asked to respond to the message in any way. To elicit a response would be seen as *calculated to assure a planned result*, usurping the work of the Holy Spirit.

Consider that the famous Jonathan Edward's sermon, "Sinners in the hand of an angry God" was not preached, but 'read', with little, or no voice inflection. The reason the hearers response to that message was considered a movement of God was precisely because the reaction it inspired was spontaneous. It was not a 'hyped' up message.

Appeals to the emotions were *not* generally considered a legitimate means of getting a sinner to turn to Christ. After the sermon, no altar call was given. To the ministers in that time an altar call would have been considered *manipulative*. They believed that if God were not willing to stir the people's hearts, why would a minister attempt to elicit an emotional response?

Therefore it is safe to say that the appeal was not to the emotions, but the *conscience* and hence the WILL. Emotions fade, but a genuine conversion to Christ will yield a born again Christian.

Emotional 'decisions' lead to spurious conversions. Consider that Jonathan Edward's toiled six months in the First Great Awakening and was ecstatic to see 300 souls saved. Compare that to modern evangelistic events where according to the promoters, "10,000 responding to the invitation to Christ" or in Africa were folks are responding in HUGE evangelistic campaigns by the hundreds of thousands and 'saved' by the millions.

Dr. D. James Kennedy recently reported that his stats show that over 45% of Americans are really Christians. The reason we arrive at those claims is that the criteria for determining who is or is not a Christian is very obscure and quite unbiblical in most cases. Once the emphasis was placed on 'quantity' and not 'quality' of conversions- it became a numbers game. It has been said that in order to 'manage' one must be able to 'measure'. And the Evangelical Church has been numbing the people for over 100 years.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2006/3/7 10:43

Hi Robert :-) I believe you're right but you're using the wrong example. The Finney revivals boasted a retention rate of almost 90% where as someone like say a Billy Graham has published that only 30-40% who come for salvation have salvation that sticks with them. I personally believe that the method doesn't matter as much as it does to have a Father Nash backing you up in intense intercession before and after the campaign. Lord give us more godly intercessors.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/7 10:51

"NEW MEASURES" IN THE WRONG HANDS

Patrick McIntyre in his work *"The Scandal of Modern Evangelism"* writes, "Finney believed most Ministers disliked the 'new methods' because they were unwilling to call their congregations to repentance. He thought they used the 'sovereignty of God' as an excuse for putting up with nominal Christianity." A cursory look at Finney's "Lectures on Revival" demonstrate this.

Yet, it must be remembered that Finney was a very dedicated man of God whose personal standard of holiness was so high he considered the drinking of tea to be an extravagance. His sober countenance, (and perhaps the presence of the Holy Spirit), caused many to break down emotionally. He took the words of Jesus literally, and eschewed the lures of the world without compromise.

Perhaps the 'new measures' were appropriate to his complete devotion and trust in the power of God. Finney believed folk should come out and demonstrate their repentance and faith. Like Elijah demanding "Who is on my side?" or Joshua, "Choose this day who you will serve," his methods were a natural extension of his zeal.

Finney did not compromise the born again standard. In fact, Finney was far more exacting than most conservative Evangelicals today ever hoped to be. His "False Comfort For Sinners" is perhaps the best guide ever written for ministers in dealing with the lost. But because the 'new methods' appealed to the emotions, any persuasive charlatan (even a wolf in sheep's clothing) could use them with seemingly impressive results. Finney used whatever was at hand to bring a person to repentance and faith. He believed that a person could and MUST repent NOW.

Everyone is not Charles G. Finney though. Where Finney might spend two weeks teaching on salvation before someone even got up and sat on the anxious seat; a lesser minister might try to convince sinners to come forward or to an altar call after one sermon. Hence we witnessed the beginnings of new 'measures' being used in the beginning as a 'good thing', but would later be taken by folk and used with a halfhearted Gospel and the results are unimaginably horrifying. What a dangerous thing these new measures became in the hands of careless ministers.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2006/3/7 12:48

Brother PP wrote:

Quote:
-----What would be a good definition of conviction? When God's holiness confronts man's sin and brings an uncomfortable feeling?

Psa. 119:75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right,
And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

Psa. 119:120 My flesh trembles for fear of You,
And I am afraid of Your judgments.

Psa. 119:156 Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD;
Revive me according to Your judgments.

Psa. 119:175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise You;
And let Your judgments help me.

Psa. 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.

The judgements, the convictions by the Holy Spirit will continue as long as we walk in the light.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/7 14:19

FROM "HOPEFULLY CONVERTED" TO "SAVED" IN 39 YEARS (Section 4)

THE FIRST MODERN DAY ALTAR CALL

Some accounts tell us that as early as 1740's, Eleazer Wheelock, a Congregational Minister, had to stop preaching because he was drowned out by the "distress and outcry" of the congregation. "Not being able to finish his sermon, with great apparent serenity and calmness of soul, he called to the distressed, and desired that they gather themselves together in the body of the seats below" (The front seats). This is perhaps the beginnings of the modern "altar call". Wheelock is said to have only shared the Gospel and prayed for the penitents. He never presumed to have them repeat a formula "sinner's prayer."

Over the next 200+ years the practice of public invitation would evolve into the modern day 'altar call' as has been witnessed hundreds of times in modern mass evangelism crusades. Some, in the early days, used the simple mourner's bench. Anxious meetings were held after the meeting or the next day for those who felt 'anxious' about their soul. Some preferred the "inquiry room", where they have the exercises of prayer for the lost, and the like. Praying for penitents, in itself, was not considered a "new method." It was common with Whitefield and Wesley. Any who sought prayer, were welcome to see them after the meeting.

They prayed that penitents would yield themselves fully to God, but never led them in a formula "salvation prayer." By the 1800's, the practice of calling penitents forward for prayer was well established." Ministers usually, at the close of the preaching, would tell the congregation that if there were any persons who felt themselves lost and condemned under the guilt and burden of their sins, that if they would come near the stage, and kneel down, they would pray for them.

Shame at first kept many back, but as the work increased, numbers, apparently under strong conviction, would come and fall down before the Lord at the feet of the ministers. Sometimes 20 or 30 at a time."

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/7 17:56

WHAT WAS DONE WAS DONE

McIntyre continues along this line, "Finney could not undo what he had done. The die was cast. All the clichés and quackery epitomized by Sinclair Lewis' Elmer Gantry began here. Charles Finney's methods, in the hands of incompetents and charlatans would ultimately produce millions of spurious conversions. The "methods" became the easiest way for ungifted and lazy men to produce "results."

It was like giving a gun to a six-year-old child. Evangelists like D.L. Moody used some "methods" to good effect. Others, less gifted, abused the "methods" and brought reproach on all evangelists. The "methods" were not widespread until Billy Sunday, the model for Lewis' Elmer Gantry. Though well meaning, Sunday popularized the tally system, emphasizing the number of people who "walked the sawdust trail" instead of how many people "the Lord added to the Church."

Sunday popularized the practice of "coming forward" as a symbol for the sinner who wanted to "get right with God." Des

pite this, Sunday in the beginning still relied on the after meeting where counselors would deal with awakened sinners one-on-one. He never led people in a formula "salvation prayer."

Re: "The Betrayal Of The Ages", on: 2006/3/8 1:19

Robert, this is very good and very good of you to go through the trouble to put this up for us.

His Blessings to you.

Annie

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/8 8:57

PREACHERS BECOMING CELEBRITIES

Perhaps we could lay much of the problem at the feet of the use of the modern day 'press'. When 'meetings' were advertised and covered in the news papers suddenly there was an added pressure to have 'results'. After all, who wants to report that the meeting was a bust?

D.L Moody preached his last sermon at the Great Convention Hall in Kansas City MO on November 16, 1899. his message title was, 'Excuses.' He died on December 22 of that same year, never seeing the 20th century. Before the days when Rex Humbard would become the father of modern day televangelism, D.L. Moody is credited with aiding in the development of the modern newspaper as they were used for creating the great wave of interest in this one very public evangelist and the meetings in general. Preachers were becoming celebrities and icons.

Again, as with Finney, so with Moody, the 'new measures' of using the press was in itself *not* a bad thing. But it was like giving a six year old a gun for the incompetent. Some people simply cannot handle the popularity and the pressure to compromise becomes enormous for a host of reasons. Suddenly numbers were being printed in the papers. Attendances numbers and numbers of 'hopefully converted'. Notice the term again *hopefully* converted. This is as far as men dared to go in their reporting of numbers; but as with anything, the boldness to intrude into those things which we know not, vainly puffed up by fleshly minds, eventually took the place of reason.

Before we move to our next point I must again state the importance of understanding the 'pressure' of reporting positive results in the press. This *pressure* was no doubt a major cause of the erosion of the criteria degeneration for what it meant to be saved. The world was becoming 'quantity minded' and not *quality* minded. The industrial revolution was weighing in heavily to the whole philosophy of life. More, more, more... faster, faster, faster....

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/8 9:38

YOU CAN "MEET" A STAR

As the "altar call" became more common, the numbers that came forward increased. During the 1800's, the act of going forward to receive prayer was never considered the means of salvation. But through the changing of generations, the Biblical understanding of the sovereignty of God was slowly replaced by a modern "quick-fix" mentality. The "struggle of faith" and "praying through" was replaced by signing your name on a decision card.

Billy Sunday was a very popular professional baseball player before becoming a minister. His method of preaching broke the mold by any standard. At times he would even have a baseball bat on the platform and utilize it during the preaching. He started out in the beginning like D.L. Moody, with the emphasis on individual counseling in the after meeting. But by the end of his career this was fading or faded completely.

Billy Sunday asked folk to come forward to shake his hand as an indicator that they were turning to Christ. This marked a strong turning point in the way in which altar calls changed. Consider how he was a ball player and many wanted to 'shake his hand'. No doubt many were sincere also.

Early reports in the 1800's suggested that only 10% of the persons who went forward in an altar call were "hopefully saved." As the decades past, the percentage grew to as much as 30%. Then, much later, the number might be 50%. Until finally, by 1918, the newspapers reporting that everyone who "hit the sawdust trail" to shake Billy Sunday's hand were sa

ved. The objectivity was all but gone and the emphasis on folk actually being born of the Spirit was being replaced with a simple decision.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/8 10:04

A QUICK LOOK BACK

Earlier we determined that it was Charles Finney's 'new measures' that fell into the hands of careless ministers that led us to where we are today with the de-emphasis on the new birth. However, Finney believed that when a person was truly converted they should make a public profession of their faith. This was a departure from previous methods that simply took a 'wait and see' approach.

Finney believed that a person could be brought to salvation at once after they had gone through the process of conversion. While under great conviction the people were often invited to sit in the 'anxious seat' in the front of the meeting place. These people would be counseled and prayed for in the 'anxious meeting' that night or the next day. Sometimes he would go to their house.

During the meetings Finney would occasionally ask the people to stand up if they intended to serve Christ. Other times he called them forward once there was some certainty that they were saved. Again, being intentionally redundant here the term you frequently see used is, 'hopefully converted.' Not knowing the hearts of men, it is impossible to fully know who is saved; but upon seeing fruits of repentance and verifiable and compelling evidence- Finney would consider them 'hopefully converted.'

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/8 14:33

THE END OF 'HOPEFUL' CONVERSIONS

Since God doesn't change, only the definition of what it meant to be "saved" was slowly changing. By 1918, a newspaper reported, " CONVERTS RUSHED TO GRASP HANDS OF BILLY SUNDAY." According to the media, "Publicly acknowledging their belief in Jesus Christ as their savior, and expressing their repentance for sin, 425 men, women and children of all ages and types, surged down the sawdust trail to the platform at the tabernacle last night to grasp the hand of Billy Sunday and to be enrolled as professing Christians." 100% of the people who went forward were considered "saved" because of their singular act and supposed mindset. Lost in the frenzy was the Biblical teaching of the sovereignty of God and the born-again experience. The terminology "hopeful conversion" was lost by the end of Billy Sunday's career. Within a 39-year span, "hopeful conversions" were replaced with "X number of people got saved."

Notes:

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press) Quote originally taken from G. Campbell Morgan "A First Century Message to Twentieth Century Christians", pp. 40-42)

Adam Clarke commentary on Matthew 5:32.

<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdateNarrow&BarnaUpdateID=194>

Persecution every Christian's Lot. (2 Tim. 3:12) (George Whitfield 1700's)

"Ten Shekels and a Shirt" (Paris Reidhead sermon +-1965)

CHARLES G. FINNEY (Lectures on Revival Series)

PATRICK MACINTYRE, "The Scandal of Modern Evangelism" ©2005

ibid (scandal)

The Effective Invitation. R. Alan Streett c. 1984

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/9 8:45

Thank you for putting this together. I plan on printing it off and giving it to my pastor. I know he would enjoy this.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/9 8:57

REDISCOVERING EVANGELISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY (Section 5)

When we rewind the tape and return to the first century we find an entirely different method of ministry when it comes to 'invitations' to come to Christ. Even in the days of Wesley, Whitefield, and Finney we do not read of responses like we find in Acts. We read of folk falling from their seats or clinging to the posts of the building (Edwards), but how often have we heard that the folk cried out, "Men, what must we do to be saved?"

Peter on the Day of Pentecost concluded his sermon with these words, *'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'* Coming from 40 days of seeing the Lord, it took but a simple message to reach the hearts of this people who were crying *crucify* several weeks before. Notice their reaction to Peter's preaching, *'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'* (Acts 2:36-37). This response was the result of the working of the Holy Spirit through the word of God alone. Notice there was no music playing or sad songs being sung. That day the apostles witnessed the genuine conversion of three thousand people and when the word of God says they were 'added' we can rest assured that the conversions were legit.

Paul gives us some insight into his preaching methods. Keep in mind that this is the means by which the Church at Corinth came into being. Here we read, *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:* (I Corinthians 2:4) Today we are highly impressed by the words of man's wisdom that seems to flow upon the pages of writings from the 18th and 19th Century. Their articulation fills us with awe and amazement! But was this the secret of their success? Certainly it was not Paul's; *my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom,....*

If we are not careful we will again miss the fundamental element in effective evangelism. It is not enough to go back and look at the works of the great revivalists because we tend to focus on the marvel of their pen and preaching. But this is not where the power is. Peter was not an exceptional orator. Paul was highly educated, but he did not lean upon that education as some may think. He leaned upon the Holy Spirit in all things.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/9 14:02

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK?

(SOME CONSIDERATIONS FROM C.S. LEWIS)

Should we consider the past or just continue on as if the problem will eventually correct itself? Pride comes front and center at this point. C.S. Lewis would no doubt argue that the clock needs to be 'turned back' anytime it is telling the wrong time. If we have taken the wrong road we need to stop, turn around and go back and find the 'right' road as soon as possible. The man who turns back soonest will be the most progressive man. If we have started a math problem and begin working it the wrong way we have to correct it before we can go farther; otherwise, the answer will be wrong. There is nothing 'progressive' about being pig-headed and refusing to admit a mistake.

C.S. Lewis also commented in his lecture "Lessons from Wartime" that, "We need an intimate knowledge of the past not because the past has anything magic about it...but to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much which seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion. A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village: the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the mic

rophone of his own age".

“Chronological Snobbery”

Chronological snobbery is “the presumption, fueled by the modern conception of progress, that all thinking, all art, and all science of an earlier time are inherently inferior, indeed childlike or even imbecilic, compared to that of the present. Under the rule of chronological snobbery, the West has convinced itself that "intellectually, humanity languished for countless generations in the most childish errors on all sorts of crucial subjects, until it was redeemed by some simple scientific dictum of the last century". It has become to believe that "anything more than a hundred years old is ancient" and "in the world of books, or opinions about books, the age at which senility sets in has now been reduced to about ten" (Barfield)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/13 13:33

OBEYING FROM THE HEART THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE

It is interesting to note that the early Church had a definite means by which folks were brought to Christ. Upon hearing and believing the word which was delivered unto them, they went through a three fold progression: repentance, faith, and water baptism. Notice how this plays out in Acts 8:

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeſt? And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? And he deſired Philip that he would come up and ſit with him. The place of the ſcripture which he read was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee, of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he answered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

It is clear from this passage that Phillip preached that Christ was the Son of God and that he must be believed upon with "all of thy heart." This is the Eunuch's response to the revelation of who Christ is, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*. It is further clear that Phillip preached the need to be baptized in water, even though the depth of what that baptism meant was likely not known. And characteristic of a heart that is turned right towards God is to want to ACT on the known will of God. Here we read:

See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

The Eunuch knew it was God's will and desired to fulfill 'all righteousness'; that is, all that he could at that point and time. This is evidence of change. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure, truly, this is evidence of God working 'in' this Eunuch. He had heard that water baptism was God's will and he acted on that knowledge at first opportunity. No quarreling and haggling about whether he 'had to'; but a burning desire to do His Lord's bidding.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/14 10:47

FIRST EXPRESSIONS OF FAITHFULNESS

Some thoughts from G.W. North's "One Baptism"

Whilst this great sense of gratitude is still upon him, the believer should be impressed with the need for immediate baptism. There is a very real link between salvation and baptism, and it is stated for us by no less a person than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'.

This is a remarkably plain and unadorned statement which cannot be disregarded if we, like Him, are going to fulfil all righteousness. Now while it is quite true that he that believeth not shall not be saved, it is not true that he who is not baptized in water shall not be saved. Salvation does not rest upon water baptism, but the salvation / regeneration which we preach does rest upon being baptized into Christ. Seeing then that baptism in water is used by the Lord as a symbol and picture of that

Spiritual Baptism, it can hardly be expected that sincere persons who experience the latter would or should quibble about submitting to the former. Moreover, as we are informed in Acts 2 that those who gladly received Peter's word on the day of Pentecost were baptized, it cannot be said that anyone refusing such baptism is one spirit with the early Church. It is obvious that from John Baptist onwards into the commencement of the Church age, it was normal practice that when a person received the word, he or she also received baptism. In fact baptism is so identified with heart-faith that in some cases it is spoken of as though it were that faith; repentance and baptism are linked together in scripture as one would normally link repentance and faith.

This is most enlightening, and upon reflection it is most natural; repentance, faith, baptism are three progressive steps in a natural progress. Not that baptism is to be regarded or in any way made to be a substitute for faith, it is an expression of heart-obedience to faith. This is very sweetly shown to us by the uncomplicated person of Lydia of Philippi. That lady, responding to the preached word of Paul immediately desired to be baptized as an expression of her faithfulness to the Lord.

Re: - posted by My_Daughter, on: 2006/3/17 13:21

Quote:

I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown... God calls to remembrance such a love. It is the 'first love', the love we had when we first followed Christ. The love that kept Christ on our hearts day and night- the love that burned with a holy zeal for His glory and a unquenchable hunger for His presence.

Thank You, I had read this a while back, and was lead to look at it again. This is what the lord wanted to say to me.

May you please post more on the Pursuit of God.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/21 16:53

Bump...

This thread isn't over yet is it? ;-)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/21 16:58

Quote:

-----Bump...

This thread isn't over yet is it

Sorry, I had been out for several days. I'll get back to it.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/22 9:45

THE FIRST SIGNS OF LIFE (a 'spiritual' appetite)

The disciples then said one to another, 'Did any one bring him anything to eat?' Jesus saith to them, 'My food is, that I may do the will of Him who sent me, and may finish His work; (John 4 YLT)

After the New Birth experience (John 3:3) there is a definite 'order' that God has for us just as we find with natural birth. We are told at the end of I Peter 2 verse 2 that we are to *desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby*. This is what newborn babies do *naturally*. Babies are born with appetite. Notice that Jesus said his 'food' was to do the will of Him that sent Him. Doing God's will is Christ's desire- as we would desire to eat food. This is a remarkable truth that we must grasp. Those who are 'in' Christ ALSO have this craving to do the will of the Father. It is what *gratifies* and gives the sense of *fulfillment*; it is their 'meat' (food).

The 'milk' that Peter describes comes to us in the form of preaching and teaching. It is the job of pastors and teachers to feed the newborn children of God with milk. The pastor must take the meat of the word, mix it with his own personal prayer time, and feed it to the congregation. The word is 'processed' (as it were) in the heart of the minister. There is a little lesson here also on the importance of watching our 'diet' as ministers. because invariably, what we take in will find its way into the milk supply.

Paul speaks along these lines also;

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal (I Corinthians 3:2-3).

This is a hard saying. New Born believers are *supposed* to be 'spiritual' even though they are babes in Christ. To whatever extent a person could be carnal, if at all (and still truly be born again), until a believer begins to grow spiritually they will not be able to eat anything other than milk. As the body grows so does the need for stronger foods. Babies do not eat solid food such as meat and potatoes. These principals carry over in our understanding of spiritual growth.

Keep in mind that the food is not 'food' until it is digested. This is the process of knowing and responding rightly to the known will of God. The will of God comes first as simple things (as we seen in our previous entry) such as water baptism. A person hears that it is God's will that we be baptized and their right response in going through with the ordinance makes the commandment 'meat' to them. It is not 'meat' or 'food' until the obedience is fulfilled. The old timers used to say, "eat your food it will put meat on your bones!" Obedience to the known will of God is the primary thing that will put meat on your bones spiritually.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/22 10:36

GROWTH STUNTING SIN

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14).

"Obedience is better esteemed with God than acquired knowledge, indeed it is the most important lesson of all, and fundamental to the gaining of all spiritual knowledge from God." (G.W. North) Due to a lack in spiritual growth, the recipients of this letter were reprimanded for not being able to understand the most basic elements of Scripture, in so much that the writer could not advance on the thought he wanted to pursue, because he knew they did not have the spiritual growth required to understand it and walk in it. This happened to Paul also in our previous entry as the people were yet 'carnal'. He desired to feed them with meat, but they were yet not able.

It is stunning that today the very subjects that the writer to the Hebrews considered as "milk" are what we would consider as "meat," which is more than anything a testament to the desperate need for a different attitude towards complete obedience. I believe that this is one of the fundamental areas in which we have also been duped by the

enemy. Here we read, *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

What does it mean to *exercise* your senses? The word exercise here is 'discipline'. Why is it fundamental to your spiritual growth? How can the word of God be used in this process? In our next entry we will look at the 7 senses.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/22 13:17

HEART TRAINING BEGINS WITH TRAINING THE SENSES

We are told in Proverbs 4:23:

Above every charge keep thy heart, For out of it 'are' the outgoings of life.

If something gets into your heart it will become an issue in your life. What do you mean 'something'? Anything that seeks to turn your heart away from God is what must be guarded against. We read in II Peter 2:14 of a people who have *eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin...* then we read, *an heart they have 'exercised' with covetous practices....* The word exercised here is the Greek *gumnazo* and it means to exercise vigorously either the body or the mind. We would use the word 'trained' or 'training'. Imagine a heart 'trained' with covetous practices? It would reason that the heart could also be 'trained' in godliness if so be that the person in question is born again and has a 'new heart' (Jeremiah 31:33).

So we have the heart that needs to be 'trained' and senses that need to be trained. Our senses are the faculties by which we perceive. We have 5 natural senses that allow perception of our physical environment. We have also the *conscience* and the *tongue*. The conscience reveals our standing towards God and the tongue reveals the 'abundance' of our heart (out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks).

It would be good to stop and point out that the one who bridles the tongue according to James, the same is a 'perfect man' and able to bridle the whole body. The word for 'perfect man' in the Greek is the same as our passage in Hebrews which tells us that strong meat is for those that are 'full age'. So we see a connection between the one who guards his heart and the one who controls his tongue. If one does not exercise their senses their heart will be filled with all manner of ungodly things. This is revealed by the tongue.

Which brings me to an old 'robverb' I have used through the years; *if I exercise my senses to discern good and evil, I am able to control my tongue to speak good and not evil..*

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/23 8:59

THE CHAMBER OF IMAGES

It is an axiom of scripture that if *I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me* (Psalm 66:18). This 'iniquity' is anything that could provoke the Lord to jealousy. We learn of this in Ezekiel 8-10. The leaders had allowed iniquity to be plastered upon the walls of their heart as it were, and God seen it. This is a dreadful consideration for those who desire to walk in the fulness of the Spirit.

How did those things find themselves in the heart? Certainly in part it was through the portal of the eyes. Your first and greatest sense is your eye sight. All of a man's senses would he trade for his eyes. Job understood the power the eye wields in turning the heart towards evil things. He wrote:

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit; Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase (Job 31:1-12).

Notice what he says, If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes. This is a powerful statement and evidence of the controlling force of the eyes. Eve looked upon the tree and saw that it was 'pleasant to the eyes'- and her heart walked after them.

Our Lord also addressed this:

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness... (Matthew 6) The context seems to indicate a person that has a covetous eye. When we say 'covet' we are covering the full spectrum of all things that can be coveted. To covet means to 'set your heart upon'. Now we are back to Job's statement about the heart following the eyes.

Solomon even weighed in on this topic and with supreme experience and authority stated that *the eye is not satisfied with seeing...* This is the nature of the eyes- they cannot be satisfied. No matter what they look upon as their own- it is never enough. Not enough money, houses, lands, etc. The eyes are never full.

The problem with all this is that evil things (that which would displease the LORD) which our eyes communicate to our minds and then hearts when not 'cast down' get 'regarded' and then the Lord does not hear us. No person can serve two masters. We simply cannot serve God and mammon (or anything else). When we 'exercise' our eyes to discern good from evil we will keep those things from our minds. That is one of the reasons why we have eyelids. If it doesn't go in the eyes it doesn't go in the mind and heart (at least through that passage). Keeping the mind and heart 'exercised' towards godliness begins with exercising the senses to filter (discern) the evil out. Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/23 10:18

Quote:

-----"Chronological Snobbery"

Recall this very well.
Besides, wanted to keep this up in view.

Great work here brother.

"The Betrayal Of The Ages", a documentary on the de-emphasis of the 'New Birth'. - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/23

Required reading here.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/24 9:06

GOD'S PRESENCE WITHDRAWN

When you think about tabernacles and temples, what comes to mind? The Wilderness Tabernacle and its many layers of coverings and furniture? What about Solomon's Temple fitted with gold and costliness? When you think of "house of God" what comes to mind? A church building? Do you consider that all of these terms from the Old Testament pointed to the eventual reality of the Holy Spirit coming to tabernacle among men in the bodies of man? Stephen the deacon pointed this out:

Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things. Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts 7)

This is another KEY aspect to the lies of the enemy in our times. Satan would have us content to keep God locked up in

side the four walls of a 'church' building 6 days a week and refer to that building as the "House of God." This is precisely the mindset that Stephen was taking on. Folk want to leave off from God and do their own thing- not knowing that the thing that makes a Christian a Christian is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

If you are born again YOU are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. He dwells inside of YOU as an individual and us as a corporate body of Christ. This is both awesome and terrible to consider! We have all heard the saying, "What if Jesus came to your house to visit?" Then folk ponder this reality and get all nervous wondering if somehow He were to come what they would hide or clean out. I can almost hear the echo of Stephen again, *what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things. Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye...* . Wist ye not that the Holy Ghost dwells in you except you be reprobate? Jesus LIVES in your house as you are the Temple of God. He is not coming to visit- He is already there as a present reality. This is what we learn in a figure is the mindset of those we read about in Ezekiel 8. And this is a plank that must be installed back into the bridge if we are ever to be repairers of the breach in our generation.

A friend of mine said to me recently concerning Ezekiel 8, "Ezekiel 8 a thing very strange here is. The prophet was sitting among the elders of Judah and the Spirit takes him (by the hair of the head) off to show him the sins of the people. I was thinking about this very thing the other day and do from time to time about *God watching everything we do*. God took him to the inner court of the north gate and show him the sins of the elders first who he was sitting. Imagine sinning in the inner court of the sanctuary at the mercy seat? Offering up strange fire, the very thing that got killed the two sons of Aaron. These sins cause God to go far away from his sanctuary. Then he said, 'now turn again and you will see greater abominations'.

Imagine, here are the elders of Judah sinning and trying to do like Samson (they went to shake themselves as it were and the Spirit was gone and they didn't even know when He left). This is a common mistake of the people today. They don't realize God is gone until its too late. Just because a person is prosperous and in good health doesn't mean God is still 'there'. This was a grave mistake the people made in the day of Jeremiah. Their mistake was (also) that they were praying to the Queen of heaven and prospering from God and thinking it was coming from The Queen of Heaven. There is nothing that provokes God to jealousy more than you trying to do things without Him and giving others credit for it (when it is HIS blessings).

The Church doesn't realize that anything that is not of faith is sin. Sin starts out with "I will do this thing one time and not again" and the next thing you know here is 'another' and it gets worse and worse until God essentially said, "Go to the next door and see greater abominations and the next door is even greater." "

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/24 11:37

Exo 19:12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, **Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:**

Exo 19:13 **There shall not a hand touch it**, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, **it shall not live**: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

Exo 19:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, **Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.**

Exo 19:22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, **lest the LORD break forth upon them.**

Exo 19:23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

Exo 19:24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: **but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.**

That is the God that lives inside of us.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Co 3:17 **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.**

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/24 12:30

Hi PreachParsley,

Quote:

-----That is the God that lives inside of us.

Awesome to consider! Thank God for His grace and mercy.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/24 14:31

Quote:

-----Awesome to consider! Thank God for His grace and mercy.

Amen! Lately I have been thinking a lot about the verses I listed. It just makes me think about how Holy he is. It brings new light to the fear of the Lord, along with how much grace he has given.

It makes me tremble to think that He would abide in me, and that I could abide in Him! Oh! Let's open our mouths and let that power speak through us!

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/27 9:21

SPIRITUALLY PROPPED UP (A '1 legged chair')

I wish to describe a condition that is found frequently in churches today that is resulting in countless people continuing on in a state of Spiritual death unawares. Leonard Ravenhill comments in his Video Interview that the cause of folk 'falling' in the faith can be traced back directly to ones devotional life. I believe this is a true saying.

When we speak of devotional life we are referring to our personal walk with God and the means by which we express that relationship. The desire of a true Born Again believer is to *know* the Lord. More than knowing 'about' God- they wish to know the Lord in a personal relationship.

The means by which we come to know the Lord is our personal devotions. We read the scriptures that we might come to know more of the Lord and we spend time in prayer that we might fellowship with Him. In this we discover what God desires for us in terms of ministry. This is also found in our genuine fellowship with believers as we come together. This is 4 separate things: personal time in the scriptures, prayer, ministry, and fellowship.

Imagine these 4 things are four legs on a chair (as it were) which represents our devotional life. In my experience, it is either personal prayer or bible reading that is the first 'leg' to get neglected. The other of the two will follow. Thirdly it is ministry that goes in that folk start feeling like the sacrifice is too great or that they are 'wearing too many hats' (and sometimes they really *are*). However, keep in mind this is a progression. Prayer is gone, the word is gone, and now there is no 'oil' to burn in ministry and that leg is cast off also.

This leaves one 'leg' on the 'chair' and it is the leg of church attendance or fellowship. I typically find this to be the last leg to go. Folk may have no real devotional life at all and *still* come to church service. They may be feeding themselves all manner of evil and as the believers at Corinth (chapter 3) and the Hebrews (chapter 5) they are regressing in spiritual mat

urity. They go from the milk to the meat and back to the milk in Hebrews 5. they were fed milk over and over in I Cor. 3 and yet never matured to the 'meat'. Simply stated they were not maturing because they were not applying the word to their life. More specifically they were not training their senses and *withdrawing* from evil influences. They were subjecting themselves to things that stunted and REVERSED their spiritual maturity. There is only one step back to go once one goes from the table to the high chair to the baby bottle and that is full on *carnality*.

This is the state of many who attend 'services' or 'meetings' in churches. they have no real devotional life and they are filling their hearts with evil things. They are sitting in a chair that has one leg on it. No prayer, no bible, no ministry, but they are still coming to church. So what keeps them from falling?

Ever seen a construction where the walls of the building are 'propped up' with braces? That is what the 'leg' of the chair looks like if we could pull back the cover. Many are content to know that there are many folks with no devotional life so efforts are made to keep them 'propped up' so they don't appear to fall totally over. Programs are brought in that keep the people "coming to church" so they don't appear to have backslid or not to have been saved.

For youth it is often pizza, pepsi, popcorn and ping pong. Perhaps even X-Box in some cases. And when those 'props' lose their effectiveness or the youth grow out of them- they walk out of youth groups across America after high school at a rate of 88%. That is a retention of just 12%. What happened? No devotional life.

The sad reality is that the seeker sensitive movement seeks to find new and crafty ways to compensate for the missing 'legs'. If they just keep coming to church then their not really backslid, right? They are really saved if they keep coming, right? Its not just about coming to Church its about a personal walk with God. The sad thing also is, the scenerio I presented acts almost like an immunization to a real walk with God.

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/4/5 11:40

Bump

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 8:56

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS (Part 1)

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (I Corinthians 1:18)

We learn later in I Corinthians 2 & 3 that the natural man does not receive the things of God, neither can he/she know them because they are spiritually discerned. Paul takes this thought early on to a different level in stating that the preaching of the cross is actually 'foolishness' (Gk. stupid) to the unsaved. Paul did not complicate the doctrine when preaching to the Greeks by making it appear as 'wisdom' or some 'new thing'. He did not communicate the message with complex arguments to try to win them over (I Corinthians 2:7, Acts 17:21). He writes, *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (I Corinthians 1:17)*. Why would it cause the cross of no effect to make the doctrine appeal to those who think themselves wise? Because the cross slays a man and leaves him 'dead' to any form of glorying in himself. To remove that aspect of the cross, it to make it of none effect.

So we know that the cross forces the 'wise' in this world to humble themselves if they are to be saved. What about the Jews and those who were self-righteous? Paul writes to the Galatians, *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased (Galatians 5:11)*.

The cross was 'foolishness' to the Greeks, but it was offensive and even a stumblingblock to the Jews (I Corinthians 1:23). Why? Because it places the work and therefor the glory strictly in the hands of God. Salvation is a work of Grace and not a work of man (lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2:8). For those which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ (is) the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 9:01

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD (Part 2)

The first aspect of the cross that we will examine is the 'shedding of blood'. In Hebrews 9:22 we read, *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* The writer says 'almost' because in some cases certain vessels were purified by water (Numbers 19:8), some by fire (31:23), and some with the ash of the red heifer (19:2-10). However, it was always understood that everything was first consecrated by the blood of an innocent victim (in these cases animals).

When we talk about 'blood' we are referring to the life of a person. God told Adam that in the day that he ate of the tree he would surely die. Death or 'blood shed' is the penalty for sins (Ezekiel 18:20). To shed blood means 'to kill'. Why? Because the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11); and when the blood pours out- the life is poured out. You may recall that the name *Adam* means to be 'rosy', 'ruddy', or 'flush' (with blood). So we see a direct connection to the name God gave to man ('Adam') and the blood (life) that flows in his veins.

There is another *mysterious* connection between the man and his blood. When Abel's blood was shed by his brother it cried unto God from the ground (Genesis 4:10). Matthew Henry comments that, "God spoke as if the blood itself were both witness and prosecutor, because God's own knowledge testified against him and God's own justice demanded satisfaction." Blood cries for blood when it is shed from sinful flesh.

Abel's blood 'testified' to which Hebrews tells us, *and he being dead yet speaketh.* Abel was an innocent man that lived a life that pleased the Lord and offered unto him an acceptable sacrifice. But as great as Abel was, there is a key difference in the blood between him and Christ. Abel was a sinner by nature as was his father; Christ was sinless by nature, as is His Father. Hebrews tells us that the shed blood of Christ (the Blood of Sprinkling that atoned for our past sins and enjoins us to the New Covenant), *speaketh better things than that of Abel.* What did Abel's blood 'say' (as it were)? We gain some insight when we look at the sentence God carried out upon Cain. Cain remarks and almost laments to God of the consequences of Abel's bloodshed by his hands; *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid.*

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 10:32

THE BLOOD SECURES OUR FELLOWSHIP (Part 3)

Cain was judged of God and fled with merely his 'physical' life. He could have been put to death (his own blood shed), but God limited the scope of his sentence. Here we read, *And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden* (Genesis 4:16). Adam had been driven from the Garden of Eden and now his son has been driven from the presence of the LORD.

What was it that was driving him? Perhaps we gain a clue from the land in which he dwelled; *And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.* On the 'other side' of the glory and presence of God; on the other side of walking and talking in peaceful fellowship with God is the 'land of Nod'. Nod is the word for which *Vagabond* is the root in Hebrew. You may have heard the phrase, "they are running from God." The word 'Nod' seems to be an expression of Cain's habitation.

When we look at the words in English that are translated from the root for *Vagabond* across the Old Testament we find, 'shaken', 'wandering', 'to flee', 'to bemoan' (mostly used), 'to be sorry', and 'to wag the head'. We almost get a picture of a man walking and shaking his head in great regret and still unwilling to cry out for mercy.

The blood of Abel called out to God and God showed mercy in sparing Cain's life. Perhaps he would see his error in godly sorrow and repent of his way? Maybe the goodness of God would lead him to repentance? yet, for Cain and all of us, Sin is crouching at the door. *Now* is the accepted time, behold *today* is the day of salvation. While it is said, *Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.*

Perhaps Abel's blood spoke 'good enough' things that his brother had not been killed, I cannot say with any certainty. We do know that his blood had no power to restore Cain back into the presence of God.

And herein is our cause of rejoicing and the means of victory. Unlike Cain and all of those who lived under Old Testame

nt and its laws and animal sacrifices and High Priests that could never take away sins; we have Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and *the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*. What does the writer to Hebrews mean, *'better things than that of Abel'*? The word 'better' is mostly used in Hebrews (13 out of 19 times) and comes from a root that means *'dominion and power'*. Vincent writes, *"The blood is (here) personified, and its voice is contrasted with that of Abel, whose blood cried from the ground for vengeance upon his murderer (Genesis 4:10). The voice of Christ's blood calls for mercy and forgiveness."* It is not just a 'voice' among many voices, but as Christ was a man that spoke with 'authority' so also, does the blood speak authoritatively better things than that of Abel. Only the blood of Christ was qualified to be the *propitiation* for our sins.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 11:23

THE BASIS ON WHICH WE HAVE OUR CONFIDENCE (Part 4)

It is interesting to note that the shedding of Abel's blood resulted in a 'separation' of Cain and God, whereas, the shedding of Christ's blood resulted in our *reconciliation* to God. *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Colossians 1:20).*

Man had offended God through Adam's sin and Sin (itself) had entered humanity (Romans 5:12). This meant that man has two problems: an offended God and a sinful nature. And they had to be dealt with in that order. The first thing was to remove the *offense*. This required an atonement for sins that were past through a *propitiation*. The word 'propitiation' simply means, *'the price paid to remove the offense'*.

That price or *'propitiation'* must be sufficient to satisfy Divine justice. As Ron Bailey points out in his Rora 2003 series, there are three backgrounds that God used to describe our salvation from Sin and sins. There is the Temple background, Law Court background, and Slavemarket Background.

Again, we are told that the penalty (price) of sin is death, therefore an innocent life had to be paid in order to balance the scales of justice (Law Court background). Death in scripture means 'separation'. At physical death the spirit 'separates' from the body. At spiritual death man is separated from God. This need for a 'propitiation' presented a great problem as there were no innocent men to give their 'life' as all were under sentence and in need of a propitiation themselves. As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:11-18).*

Adam could not pay for Adam's sins. No one can pay for their own sins. The price has to be paid by an innocent party or in other words, an *'innocent life'* has to be paid to remove the offense. This is why the concept of reconciliation is woven into the passages that deal with atonement. Once the price was paid the offense is *satisfied*. Nothing can pay for sins save the precious blood of the Spotless Lamb (ed. Christ). Therefore, it is the blood of Jesus Christ that serves as the only valid basis of our reconciliation to God. It is faith in Christ through His shed blood that secures our forgiveness before God. The price has been eternally paid. God has seen the propitiation and is satisfied. The question is, has it been appropriated in *your* life? This is the working of the Holy Spirit when we turn to God in saving faith.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 15:02

COMING BOLDLY BEFORE THE THRONE OF GRACE (PART 5)

Coming Boldly Before the Throne of Grace

Remember back to our passages concerning Cain and how he lived on the east side of Eden in the land of Nod? The place of weeping, bemoaning, and wagging the head? Cain was not the first to flee from God after they sinned. Adam and Eve, Cain's father and mother did the same thing. Why? There is a saying that goes, *"A bad conscience has a good memory."* What does that mean?

God designed man with a conscience that makes absolute judgments of absolute moral authority concerning man's moral behavior. It is that 'unaffiliated member' that does not legislate laws, but judges on behalf of God. It makes

judgments based upon what the individual believes to be the will of God at the time. It is truly a voice from eternity speaking into our temporal lives. When God is near or the light of truth is poured upon it, the conscience is awakened and the crushing hand of its judgments wear upon the mind and heart.

It has been said that a thousand voices accusing from 'without' does not have the volume of that one voice of conscience 'within'. A bad conscience knows things against us and is nagging and relentless, reminding us of our offense until we do something to right the wrong or somehow stifle its voice.

Yet, there is only one thing that will satisfy the conscience after an offense and that is the blood of Jesus Christ being applied to it (Hebrews 9:14). This is an effect brought about by a proper understanding of the tremendous value of the blood to God and its ability to satisfy the offense. The conscience is aware of any sleight of hand or false pretenses, so an accurate and right explanation of how an offense can be forgiven and the conscience 'purged' of that nagging reminder must be presented. The blood of Christ is the only explanation the conscience will rightly accept.

The Holy Spirit through Peter referred to it as the "precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19). When God says He is satisfied, what more can we add to that? As with the Children of Israel when they were preparing for the Death Angel to come, so to, in our lives, when God sees the blood applied to our lives, He passes over (in judgment).

When man feels the weight of the conscience he must turn to God for mercy and application of the blood- or he must turn from God and banish Him from his thoughts. And that, lest he suffer to the brink of insanity from blow upon blow of that inner judge (a bad conscience) condemning his/her behavior. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.* What will release man from the grip of the conscience condemning the heart?

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14)

When the blood is applied to the conscience (as it were) the conscience is purged and offers its 'green light' to draw near unto God and 'serve' Him. The Greek word for 'serve' is *Latreuo* and it is one used of those who 'serve' in the Tabernacle. Again, the idea of coming 'boldly' into the throne of grace is in view.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/7 16:31

THROUGH THE VAIL OF HIS FLESH (Part 6)
(The Unchanging Basis of our Approaching God)

Whether it be the first time or a thousand times the basis on which we approach God is always going to be the same. As the old hymn *Rock of Ages* says, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." None outgrow their need to approach God by the Blood of Jesus Christ. Whether it has been a good week or a bad one- the basis on which God accepts us is still the Blood of Christ.

So important is this to our memory that God established the ordinance of the Last Supper as a memorial to the blood and broken body of our Lord. No matter how close to God you are and how perfect you access yourself, the blood of Jesus Christ must still be the basis by which you 'access' God (as it were) and are acceptable to Him. To come any other way is presumption and arrogance at best. We must come through the Door.

Here we read, *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:14-16). Our boldness is based upon the finished work of our Great High Priest and not any attainment on our part.

On the other hand is the person who, like Adam and Eve and Cain, wander on the other side of Eden like 'vagabonds' running from God lest their conscience rise up and cause great mental distress and pain. Many have heard of the blood, but for some reason dare not receive the gift to themselves. For some they can't appreciate the value of the blood and the reform don't believe they can be forgiven. Others feel they have sinned away the day of grace. Yet still, some are convinced they can't live the life so they figure, "what's the use?" I'll just fall back into sinning again.

But what we must all realize is that the blood was not intended to remove our *sinfulness* (sinful nature) it removes our sins. God does not deal with our sinfulness with the blood, He deals with that with the Cross (W. Nee). First things first. We turn to God in repentance and reconciliation and spiritual birth takes place.

In our next study we will examine one of the great obstacles to us truly becoming 'Christlike' and it is that of self-imposed rules of the flesh masquerading as walking in the Spirit. We must realize that we don't just commit sins but that we are sinners and sinners commit sin. Many have the mistaken notion that there is something 'good' within us that when God sees it He will be pleased and accept us. But in time we realize that there is NO good thing in us. It is then that we will come by the blood every time knowing that we are saved by grace through faith and that it is God that must work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/11 8:43

TIME FOR A HYMN (Series Intermission)

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

To Christ, Who won for sinners grace
By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransomed race
Forever and forevermore.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 8:28

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST (Part 7 *second edition*)

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:3-6)

In our previous lesson we looked at the blood of Jesus Christ as the only basis on which we can approach God. God dealt with our sins with the blood. Christ is the propitiation (price required to remove the offense) for our sins.

This leaves us with one more problem. Human beings are like 'sin factories'. Although God may have dealt with our sins that are past by the blood, the nature of a fallen human being is to continue 'producing' sins. So, by way of analogy, God had to do something about the 'sin factory' itself. He could not do this with the blood; He had to do this with the cross. We must have a revelation of the cross if we are ever to live a Christian life as God intended.

Baptized Into His Death

When we truly submit to God in repentance of our sins and turn to God in saving faith we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ. We are Born Again and (ed) are 'in' Jesus Christ. We were born 'in' Adam by natural birth and all that Adam was we had inherited by nature. Sin entered Adam and ruled his heart.

After Adam fell and Sin entered, Adam became a sinner that sinned because he was now a sinner (ed). Now he was a sinner by *nature*. There is a great difference. Christ did righteousness because He was righteous. In I John 3:7,8 we read, *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that commit teth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*

One cannot become righteous by doing 'righteous deeds', it has to originate and flow from their nature. What if our nature is to 'produce sin'? Then that nature has to be dealt with. A tree is known by its fruit. You cannot change the nature of the tree by manually changing the fruit. If one were to tie or tape oranges to an apple tree, does that make it an apple tree? Of course not. Neither can a man or woman do good deeds and be righteous. The 'tree' has to be changed. This begins when we are united with Christ in His death.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 9:47

DEAD TO SIN (Part 8)

The reason that man has a nature to commit sins is that man, because of Adam, is a slave to Sin itself. Sin is the slavemaster and man is the slave. Sin rules in the heart bending him/her towards rebellion against God. This is what it is to be 'in' Adam. Adam sold the human race under Sin by his disobedience to God. All of his descendants are also slaves to Sin from birth.

Christ took Sin upon Himself and took Sin down into death—dying to Sin once and for all. At death the slave is free from his/her master. Romans 6:7 tells us, *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

When we are baptized into Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit His death to Sin liberates *us* from Sin. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin* (Romans 6:6). If you are in Christ, the old man is dead. We died to our Old Man on the Cross; when Christ died we died.

Watchman Nee in *The Normal Christian Life* is right to point out the necessity of 'knowing' this truth. Our passage states, 'knowing this'. This is something we have to grasp, believe, and know by divine revelation. We have to be able to see ourselves crucified with Christ and dead to Sin's control. Until we 'know this' we cannot understand our liberty from Sin and are vulnerable to Satan's lies. *Ye ARE dead and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)*. Can you believe that the blood covers your sins? The same scriptures tell you that ye are dead and crucified with Christ.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 12:53

KNOW YE NOT? (Part 9)

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3).

Here is that word 'know' again. The people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), but there is no 'lack' of this knowledge. There are several passages in the New Testament that reveal the truth that those who are in Christ are 'dead' to their Old Man (Colossians 3:3, Galatians 2:20, 6:14, Romans 6:6-11, etc.).

Since we are 'in' Christ all that He accomplished at the cross is applied to us. Our sins are propitiated and we are dead to Sin. Relating to an analogy from earlier in the lesson, the sin factory has been destroyed and the ground cleared for construction of the New Man.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 13:00

DEAD! BUT NOW WHAT? (Part 10)

This truth is so simple that if we are not careful we will not fully appreciate it and thereby not walk in it. In Romans 6 we read,

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This is not baptism in water, but THE Baptism in which we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ. The passage states that we are not just dead but *buried*. This is our Old Man totally done away with. This is our death and burial to Sin, Satan, and this World. This plays out by way of demonstration when we are baptized in water. It is a public proclamation of what has happened. Down into the grave and up in resurrection power.

Paul writes in Galatians 6:14:

but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

This is additional revelation of how *removed* we are from the power of Sin. When a person is literally crucified they no longer exist in the physical realm; on a spiritual level we are no longer functioning in the Kingdom of Darkness. We are dead to the world and it is dead to us. This is a double release. This is the destruction of both the shackles and chains.

A slavemaster has absolutely no power over their slave once the slave is physically dead. The slavemaster's lordship is over. Done. Through. Finished. End of story.

Remember, death means *separation*. You were 'separated' from God (dead to Him in trespasses and sins), but now, you have been raised to *life* again by the Holy Spirit. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 13:07

RESURRECTION POWER (Part 11)

When one comes to Christ in sincere repentance they are asking Christ to forgive them of their sins in exchange for their whole life. This is a transfer of ownership. This means that Sin and self are no longer ruling as we are *dead* to them; but Christ is at the helm.

There is no such thing as being free from Sin and free from Christ- one is either a slave to Sin or a slave to Christ. One is either living with Christ as the 'head' or they are living with Sin, Satan, and self as the head.

When we were spiritually raised from the dead we came alive unto God. We were reconciled and became one spirit with Him. The Holy Spirit entered and with Him came a completely new nature. While we *used* to have a nature to commit sins, now we have a nature to do righteousness. Where we *used* to have a spirit of disobedience, now we have the Holy Spirit.

As the Born Again (from above) we 'do' righteousness because we now ARE righteous (we have been made righteous); just as before we committed sins because we *were* sinners. This is a total transformation of the inner man. Our nature is changed. Sin moved out and Christ moved in. There is a new government in place and a whole new set of laws govern

erning our behavior.

Colossians 1:13 reads:

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

As the Born Again we are now citizens of a different Kingdom- *The Kingdom of God*. This is manifest in our obedience to Christ. We are in the Kingdom because we have sincerely and wholeheartedly repented and made Him the King of our lives. And as we came under His total dominion- we became citizens of the Kingdom of God. Here we read;

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6)

The servant of Sin is *now* dead. The servant of God is *alive* with the Holy Spirit living inside. The former life produced thorns and thistles; the New Man produces the fruit of the Spirit.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/4/12 14:26

Quote:
-----We are Born Again and are not 'in' Jesus Christ. We were born 'in' Adam by natural birth and all that Adam was we had inherited by nature.

What do you mean by we are born again but not 'in' Jesus Christ?

Quote:
-----Adam was a sinner that sinned because he was a sinner. He was not a sinner because he sinned. There is a great difference.

I don't understand. Adam was created a 'sinner?' I thought Adam chose to sin and then he was a 'sinner?'

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 15:08

Quote:
-----What do you mean by we are born again but not 'in' Jesus Christ?

Thanks Preach that is a type O!!

I'll correct it directly. :-o

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/4/12 15:10

Quote:
-----that is a type O!!

Thats what I thought. :-)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 15:17

Quote:

-----Thats what I thought.

Interested in any freelance editing? I really need one. :-)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 15:31

HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT (Part 12)

The great summary of the Christian life is simply this; *no longer I, but Christ*. That is Christianity in a nutshell. Not, "I quit a few bad habits". Not, "I turned over a new leaf". Not, "I started coming to church". Remember our analogy of the oranges being 'tied' to the apple tree? Jesus said it like this;

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

If you are born again you don't have to work at being a branch- you are already a branch wild by nature grafted in to the True Vine (Romans 11:24). What is our role? Look closely at what He is saying here,... *He that abideth in me*. The words used in the New Testament concerning our 'abiding' in Christ are in forms such as 'constant', 'active', 'imperative', and 'present active'; simply meaning that we have to take up a permanent ongoing residence in Christ.

Christ is as important to our spiritual life as the vine is to a branch. Without the vine- the branch withers and dies. John 15:6 reads;

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The limbs that do not remain in Him die and are of no use but to be burned. The word 'abide' also carries the concept of being 'joined' unto Christ. This is a vital spiritual union with Christ. We gain additional insight into this in I Corinthians 6:17; *but he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*. Barnes comments on this principal, "This is a sense similar to that in which a man and his wife are 'one body'. It is not to be taken literally; but the sense is, that there is a close and intimate union; they are united in feeling, spirit, intention, disposition."

This 'abiding' can only happen as we continually yield to the will of the Holy Spirit. To 'resist' the Holy Ghost is to fight against that union and the vital flow of the Spirit required to bring forth fruit. Putting it simply; as long as the Spirit is flowing, fruit will be growing.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/12 15:44

THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT (Part 13)

When Paul wrote Galatians he was confronting a problem in which the people were being told something to the effect that they needed to come under the Old Testament laws- perhaps in order to grow spiritually or come nearer to perfection. This, of course, is utterly impossible. One cannot take up laws and live by them and call it righteousness.

A truly righteous person does not need laws in that sense as the law was not 'made' for him (In other words, righteousness has to come from the inner working of the Holy Spirit as we remain filled with Him and submit to Him; i.e. 'abiding' in him). This is Christ living in me- and not me trying to live out Christ. Do you see the difference?

Paul writes to Timothy,

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this,

that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, (I Timothy 1:8).

Paul here states, that the law is *not* made for a righteous man. This means that the Law was not 'enacted' for righteous men. It had to be 'enacted' because folk were dominated by their Sin nature and God needed a way to *quantify* sin in order to expose the underlying cause of all these sins; i.e. 'the indwelling presence of Sin itself'.

The Law exposes Sin for what it is. Yet, the Holy Spirit does what the law could not do and writes the laws (nature) of God on our hearts and minds so that they become part of the fabric of our nature rather than an opportunity to arouse lust (Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 7:8).

Notice again, *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law.* Paul is here describing the normal Christian life- walking before God in complete trust with a good conscience in selfless love.

Notice also that Paul states that 'some' have *swerved* from this simple principal. And as a result fell back into wanting to teach the Law of Moses. Perhaps they realized they were falling into sins and felt like they needed to do 'something' to stop it. And all they did was do what Moses did at Sinai and try to *enact* the Law again.

Could this solve their problem? No, the people needed a fresh revelation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that they might once again, *"know this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* The ONLY answer to the Sin problem is the Cross of Christ. The only way to live acceptably before the Lord is to walk in the Spirit.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/13 7:59

'RECKONING' YOURSELF DEAD IN CHRIST (Part 14)

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life* (Romans 6:1-4).

Throughout the scriptures there are many types and shadows of the One baptism that is referred to in Ephesians 4:1-6. This 'one baptism' is the supreme baptism that all others point to. Our text reminds us that we are *not to continue* in sin so that grace may abound. Why? Because as many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death. Christ took Sin upon Himself and took it down into death destroying its power over us.

We read in Romans 6:10,11; *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The word 'reckon' is very important. It is the same Greek word used for 'imputed' that describes the way in which we are declared righteous before God. It is an *accounting* term. God reckons us righteous by grace through faith and we are to reckon ourselves dead to Sin and alive unto God.

Watchman Nee points out that accounting (mathematics) is about the only things human beings can do absolutely; 2+2=4 in Heaven, Earth, and Hell. A painter may paint a portrait and not rightly represent the thing he/she is painting; but in accounting precise and exact measures can be made with perfect accuracy. Let's return to our word, 'reckon'.

God is saying that we are to write it down as if we were writing down an absolute number. If I give you \$100 and deposit it into the bank you have \$100. You have \$100 'reckoned' to your account. Whether you know it or not or whether you believe it or not you have \$100 in your account. Now, write down *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord...* into your ledger. You ARE dead. You ARE alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. If you are in Christ that reality is as absolute as your imputed righteousness- whether you realize it and walk in it or not.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/13 8:14

THE CHANGING OF THE MIND (Part 15)

Before we explore farther what it means to be 'Baptized into Jesus Christ' we need to go backwards to the beginning a moment and discuss how so great a change in our nature comes about. Perhaps some are reading this and desire to truly be Born Again- that is, baptized *into* Jesus Christ?

The 'initial' part of the change I am referring to is the change of the mind, or *repentance* as it's commonly called. Biblical words don't have definitions as much as they have *histories* (Bailey). The word *repent* in the Old Testament is *nacham* and it is translated "to repent" about 40 times and "to comfort" about 65 times. Scholars assert several views in trying to ascertain the meaning of *nacham* by connecting the word to a change of the heart or disposition, a change of mind, a change of purpose, or an emphasis upon the change of one's conduct (Vine's).

Although it is not fully appreciated that God would ever change His mind or 'repent', many uses of the word in the Old Testament are connected with God's *repentance*. We first read of this in Genesis 6:6 where we read, "it repented the Lord that he had made man..."; we also read in Exodus 32:14, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people".

Sometimes the Lord "repented" of the discipline He had planned to carry out concerning His people:

"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jeremiah 18:8).

The word also can mean to change your mind from doing something good as we read in Jeremiah 18:10;

"If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

Perhaps the great teaching on the issue can be heard in Joel 2:13,

"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger... and repenteth him of evil"

An example of man's repentance in the Old Testament is referred to by our Lord through the example of the people of Nineveh. Some consider this the Lord's example of what repentance ought to look like. In Jonah Chapter 3 we read;

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

The people 'believed God' and they changed their minds about what they had been doing. It was a radical 'turn around' from before. Ron Bailey gave the example once that repentance is as simple as basic marching instructions; "Halt! About Face! Forward- MARCH!" But before one will turn their mind has to be changed. They have to have the light of truth poured upon their conscience until their conscience persuades the will. The harder the heart- the more difficult the task.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/13 13:51

RISEN WITH CHRIST (Part 16)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

We are coming to that aspect of the cross in which we are 'risen with Christ.' If we continue in our analogy we find that our Lord has changed locations (as it were), from the earth to the Heavens. Our passage refers to this as 'things above

where Christ sitteth'. This is an interesting passage as it turns our minds from the temporal to the eternal; from the sinfulness of this old world to the Majesty in the Heavens.

You may recall a comment from Barnes notes on our 'one spirit' relationship with Christ? He states that this is an 'intimate union'; wherein we are "united in feeling, spirit, intention, disposition." This is akin to having the 'mind' of Christ. Our minds are to come into harmony with the will of God and contemplate what He wants *contemplated*.

To set our affections (mind) on the things above is to interest ourselves in God's interests. To entertain thoughts in 'sync' with God's will in the earth. Not my will but thine be done. This is a challenge because the enemy continually seeks to distract us with 'temporal' things. He seeks to lead away our desire into some temporal thing. I have heard it said that we need an 'eternal perspective' before our eyes. As Jonathan Edwards prayed, "Lord, let eternity be in my eyes."

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/14 8:50

PRESENTING YOUR BODIES (Part 17)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

We are skipping ahead for a moment to draw attention to a fundamental aspect of our walk with Christ and it is that of our *service* to Him. 'Reasonable service' could be translated 'logical worship'. At first that sounds strange, but we have to draw attention first to the word 'therefore' in our passage. I've heard it said that when you see a 'therefore' in the scriptures you need to STOP and see what it is *there-for*.

In this case Paul is drawing attention to 11 chapters worth of explanation and then says as a result of what I have said to this point or 'therefor'. He then makes a statement with the words *logikos latreia* (logical worship). What is he saying? In light of all I have told you it is only logical that you would offer your body unto God as a living sacrifice. You don't even need spiritual insight to do the math (as it were) and see that God has purchased you for a tremendous price and it would not be anything by logical or common sense to allow Him to take possession of what is rightly His; i.e. our bodies.

Living sacrifice? What is that? Sacrifices are supposed to be dead and that is the whole point making the sacrifice, right? Yes. This is a profound passage if we really consider the implications. Imagine instead of dying physically, you die to *self* or 'self' dies and the body keeps on living. Instead of taking orders from 'self' the body is taking them indirectly from Holy Spirit through our submission as we perpetually *present our bodies therefore unto God, holy and acceptable unto Him..*

Say this to yourself, "I am not my own- I am, bought with a price." Better yet, just quote the passage, *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* (I Corinthians 6:20). You belong to God. You are not your own. You are the property of Jesus Christ. This simple fact reminds me of Military duty.

I found a blog concerning joining the Military. The writer stated, "If you wonder how it's (the Military's) different, think about this, what job have you ever had that you became the property of the employer when you were hired? When you join the military you become government property. If you go lay out on the beach and get severe sunburn, so that you are unable to do your duty you can get in trouble for damaging government property." I can't vouch for the truth of this, but I am certain that God takes His possession of our bodies VERY seriously.

In closing these thoughts I wish to point back to the term 'logical worship' or 'reasonable service'. Your body is God's property and so is your Spirit in Bibles based on Byzantine text forms. This means the whole person is God's. This has some deep ramifications! You belong to God in a special way. You have been purchased by the blood of Christ. Are you presenting your body to God and ascertaining what He desires for YOU, His paid possession, to be doing with your time, talents and resources. Or have you found it 'unreasonable' that God, after all He has done in securing our salvation, would require us to perpetually present ourselves to Him for service?

There is an unspoken 'rule' in churches that 20% of the people do 80% of the service. Despite the fact that God has told us what pure religion is and how we can serve Him as outlined in Matthew 25 and other places. Still yet, there is no abundance of folk 'presenting themselves' to God for service. And before someone says, God has not sent me there and I'm still looking for His will, consider this. How many times do you expect to tell your children to GO before they do it? Do you expect to tell them to clean their room 4 or 5 times and then have them act? Certainly not. God has already told us once

e at least in several places what to do. How many more times do we need to be told?

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/14 10:05

SERVANT OR SLAVE (Part 18)

Excerpt from "The Normal Christian Life"

By Watchman Nee

If we give ourselves unreservedly to God, many adjustments may have to be made: in family, or business, or church relationships, or in the matter of our personal views. God will not let anything of ourselves remain. His finger will touch, point by point, everything that is not of Him, and He will say: "This must go".

Are you willing? It is foolish to resist God, and always wise to submit to Him. We admit that many of us still have controversies with the Lord. He wants something, while we want something else. Many things we dare not look into, dare not pray about, dare not even think about, lest we lose our peace. We can evade the issue in that way, but to do so will bring us out of the will of God. It is always an easy matter to get out of His will, but it is a blessed thing just to hand ourselves over to Him and let Him have His way with us.

How good it is to have the consciousness that we belong to the Lord and are not our own! There is nothing more precious in the world. It is that which brings the awareness of His continual presence, and the reason is obvious. I must first have the sense of God's possession of me before I can have the sense of His presence with me. When once His ownership is established, then I dare do nothing in my own interests, for I am His exclusive property. *Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey*? (Romans 6:16). The word here rendered 'servant' really signifies a bondservant, a slave. This word is used several times in the second half of Romans 6.

What is the difference between a servant and a slave? A servant may serve another, but the ownership does not pass to that other. If he likes his master he can serve him, but if he does not like him he can give in his notice and seek another master. Not so is it with the slave. He is not only the servant of another but he is the possession of another. How did I become the slave of the Lord? On His part He bought me, and on my part I presented myself to Him. By right of redemption I am God's property, but if I would be His slave I must willingly give myself to Him, for He will never compel me to do so.

The trouble about many Christians today is that they have an insufficient idea of what God is asking of them. How glibly they say: "Lord, I am willing for anything." Do you know that God is asking of you your very life? There are cherished ideals, strong wills, precious relationships, much-loved work, that will have to go; so do not give yourself to God unless you mean it. God will take you seriously, even if you did not mean it seriously.

When the Galilian boy brought his bread to the Lord, what did the Lord do with it? He broke it. God will always break what is offered to Him. He breaks what He takes, but after breaking it He blesses and uses it to meet the needs of others. After you give yourself to the Lord, He begins to break what was offered to Him. Everything seems to go wrong, and you protest and find fault with the ways of God. But to stay there is to be no more than just a broken vessel—no good for the world because you have gone too far for the world to use you, and no good for God either because you have not gone far enough for Him to use you. You are out of gear with the world, and you have a controversy with God. This is the tragedy of many a Christian.

My giving of myself to the Lord must be an initial fundamental act. Then day by day I must go on giving to Him, not finding fault with His use of me but accepting with praise even what the flesh revolts against. I am the Lord's and now no longer reckon myself to be my own but acknowledge in everything His ownership and authority. That is the attitude God requires, and to maintain it is true consecration. I do not consecrate myself to be a missionary or a preacher; I consecrate myself to God to do His will where I am, be it in school, office or kitchen, counting whatever He ordains for me to be the very best, for nothing but good can come to those who are wholly His. May we always be possessed by the consciousness that we are not our own.

Note. Two Greek verbs *paristano* and *paristemi* are translated in these verses by 'present' in the R.V. where the A.V. has 'yield'. *Paristemi* occurs frequently with this meaning, e.g. in Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 11:2; Col. 1:22,28, and in Luke 2:22 where it is used of the presenting of the infant Jesus to God in the Temple. Both words have an active sense for which the R.V. translation 'present' is greatly to be preferred. 'Yield' contains a passive idea of 'surrender' that has coloured much evangelical thought, but which is not in keeping with the context here in Romans.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/14 16:04

RENEWING THE MIND (Part 19)

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Many people will likely ask, if we are really dead to Sin, then why do I seem to still struggle with temptation? If I don't have a 'sin nature' any longer, where are these vile temptations coming from? I believe it was John MacArthur that once said, "when we get saved we are regenerated and transformed into a New Creature, but the memories from our past still remain." (para) When I consider this I realize that these memories can be called up at a moment's notice along with the resident feelings associated with those memories. Our mind is a powerful thing. We cannot delete these thoughts, but we can greatly decrease the incidence of their coming up if we follow some basic biblical principals.

Our text says, "Be not conformed to this world..." That is the main objective in the passage. The measure we have to take is that of our minds being renewed. The word 'renewed' means 'renovation'. This implies that the mind has a tendency to *deteriorate* towards conformity to this world. What is the source or 'means' of the deterioration? We find the answer to that in another passage:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (II Corinthians 10)

I see here a progression as we read this passage in *reverse*:

- 1) Thoughts (bring into captivity)
- 2) Imaginations Gk. *logismos* 'reasonings' (casting down)
- 3) Strongholds (pulling down)

One evil thought added to another becomes a 'reasoning'. When you add reasonings together you can build an entire mindset or 'stronghold' within the thinking process that is false and even dangerous. This is "the wisdom of this world" picking away at the 'mind' of Christ we are supposed to maintain.

This is how the world casts folk into its mold. What's the measures to take? You have to abstain from all appearance of evil. A steady diet of this world's secular worldview will have devastating and often unnoticed effects on your mind. The first aspect of 'renewing the mind' is to put a stop to the flood of sinful thoughts, ideas, and concepts that come in through our senses. It only stands to reason that a person can only cast down so many evil thoughts and imaginations. This is a battle that can be easily lost if we are not diligent to guard our minds and hearts.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/18 8:27

'IF' YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST (Part 20)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

Our passage is directed at those who have been through the *born again experience*. They have been crucified with Christ and are 'dead' to the old man. This means that they are 'dead' to the control of Sin, the World and Satan. Death

means *separation* in the scriptures. So we find that the 'born again' have been 'separated from' the controlling power of these things.

In a previous study we learned that we were also 'resurrected' with Jesus Christ. This is the final phase of the New Birth process. You will recall that when we came to Christ in sincere repentance we asked Christ to forgive us of our sins in exchange for our whole life. This means that Sin and 'self' are no longer ruling (as we are dead to them) and Christ is in control.

There is no such thing as being free from Sin and free from Christ- one is either a slave to Sin or a slave to Christ. No man can serve 2 masters, and no man can serve *no* master. One is either living with Christ as the 'head' or they are living with 'self' as the head.

Before we were born again we ran our own lives and did what we wanted to do. If we wanted to steal, we stole. If we wanted to lie, we lied. If we wanted to commit sexual immorality, we committed it (Reidhead). This is the attitude of the unsaved. In this condition we were *dead* or 'separated' from the life of God. But when we were born again we were spiritually raised from the dead and came *alive* unto God. The Holy Spirit entered us and with Him came a completely new nature to do God's will instead of our will.

While we used to have a nature to commit sins, now we have a nature to do righteousness. The born again person 'does' righteousness because God has done a miracle in them that has made them righteous by nature; just as before we committed sins because we had a sinful nature. This miracle is a total transformation of the inner man. Our nature is changed. Sin moved out and Christ moved in. There is a new government in place with a whole new set of laws governing our behavior.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/18 9:03

'IF' YE BE RISEN (Part 21)

The 'if' in our passage invites us to consider whether we are 'risen' with Christ or *not*. This is the most important question we could possibly consider in all of our life; "Am I risen with Christ?" The problem with the question is that folks generally avoid such questions, as they are afraid to think about it.

For the last several years in southern Africa a team of Dr.'s and health care workers were sent in to try and battle an AIDS epidemic that has reduced the life expectancy in that region to below 40 years. They had an almost limitless supply of drugs that could fight the virus and greatly improve and extend the lives of those sick. There was a great problem though. The people refused to get checked. Some refused because they were afraid to know the truth. Others were afraid someone would find out that they had the disease. So the Gov't came up with a solution to make it mandatory for folks to be screened when they went in to the Dr. for other reasons. Many found out they had the virus and began taking the medication almost religiously. Researchers were amazed to find out that the people were more faithful to take the pills than folks in America who had the same virus.

These folks in Africa understood something. They knew that without that medicine they were *dead*. In the case of our text, if we are not 'risen' with Christ we are *spiritually dead*.

It's important to realize that people need more than forgiveness from God. Those who have not been born again are *dead in trespasses and sins* (Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13). In this condition one cannot see or *enter* the Kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5).

The window of opportunity to be born again (raised with Christ) is only in this life. Once you die it is eternally too late. You will remain dead in sins forever.

Scripture give us some graphic pictures of God's perspective of our condition apart from Him. In this condition (unregenerate) we are of virtually no use to God but to be gathered up like thorny branches, eternally cursed and burned (Matthew 3:10,12, 7:19, 13:40-50, 18:8, 25:41, Mark 9:43-49, Luke 3:9, John 15:6).

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/19 8:04

IF- THEN... (Part 22)

Again, our passage is directed to a people who have had a *definite* life transforming experience in God. This is more than a New Years resolution or the giving up of some bad habits. It is a creative miracle in which you become a new creature. Old things pass away and all become new. This is where a great many folk completely misunderstand Christianity. They may say something like, "I'll give this 'saved' thing a try" or something to that effect. The problem with this mindset is that it allows for a back-up plan. In other words, if things don't go the way I want them to, then I can always 'quit' and go back to what I was doing before.

There is a fundamental misconception in this type of false thinking that is preventing them from being saved to begin with. Christianity is not something you 'try out', 'test drive' or take home and if your not satisfied return it in 30 days for a full refund. Christianity begins in the life of a person when they hear the word of God (Gospel) and respond *rightly* to what God has said.

When I say 'rightly', I mean that they have considered the horrendous condition they are in (the 'bad news' before the 'good news'.) They heard that they were *without Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12). They also heard that they were *enemies of God* (Romans 5:10), headed for God's *unrestrained wrath* (Luke 19:27, Revelation 14:10), the *grave* (James 4:14), and the *Great White Throne Judgment* (Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:11). They see their estate as *awesomely grim*, even *without hope* in the world.

The Holy Spirit makes these truths *real* to them through tremendous Holy Ghost *conviction* ('convincing' John 15).

What would a person do or give to get out of this lost condition? There is *only* one thing they can do and that is repent and receive the free gift of salvation through the person of Jesus Christ. You *cannot earn* this gift.

When I say 'repent' I mean to *change your mind* about how you are living apart from God in such a way that you do a 180 degree turnaround. Ron Bailey points out in his 2003 message on 'repentance' that in marching terms it would be, "HALT!, about face! Forward MARCH! This is repentance in its simplest definition. When you finally change your mind in such a way that you turn to God with your whole heart, God will perform the miraculous and change you into a new creature.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/20 7:42

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS (Part 23)

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride. These are the opening words of an old hymn that the Church sang near 300 years ago, upon reading, one almost need not finish the rest of the song. For in this opening line, truly the writer has said it all. Written by Isaac Watts, and published in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707, it is significant for being an innovative departure from the early English hymn style of only using paraphrased biblical texts. Perhaps one of the more stunning considerations is that Charles Wesley reportedly said he would give up all his other hymns to have written this one. Estimates have Wesley as having written over 6000 hymns including "Hark! The herald angels sing" and "O for a thousand tongues to sing."

Notice what the hymn writer says, *When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died.* This calls for a time reflection of the tremendous suffering that Our Lord endured for my salvation as an expression of His great love for me. *Greater love hath no man than this than He would lay down His life for his friends.* This is the ultimate manifestation of the goodness of God- that upon 'surveying' ought to lead me to repentance. This means coming to terms with the fact that He died for me. That is, He suffered for my sins. We can't be quick to glaze over this. We have to 'survey' what the Lord has done for us. We need to know what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge (Ephesians 3).

We have to personalize what Christ has done on the cross. The more I survey the wondrous cross on which the Lord died for my sins, the more my heart turns 'Heaven-ward-.

Paul takes this up in Romans 12:1 when he writes, *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (logical) service of worship.* The book of Romans explains salvation and the normal Christian life. To visit this topic again momentarily we realize that Romans 12:1 is written after Paul had gone into great detail about how we are saved from the penalty and power of sin.

As a result of all he said for 11 chapters, he starts 12 with, *"I urge you therefore."* The word *'therefor'* points to everything he said to that point. He is pointing to the tremendous sacrifice Christ made and the whole mystery of what God did in Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection. Returning to our hymn for a moment and borrowing a term there, Paul *'surveyed the wondrous cross'* before their eyes. Therefore, or in light of that *'survey'*, Paul says; *present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.* The words *"reasonable service of worship"* in the original meant *"the worship that God logically deserves."* In other words, if you *'survey'* what He has done, it is only logical to present your bodies to Him as a living sacrifice.

A sacrifice is not a sacrifice unless it is dead. So how can it be living? We are to be *'dead'* to seeking what we want to do with our body and *'alive'* to seeking what God wants done. Its only *'logical'* or as the King James Version says, *'reasonable'* service. In light of all that He has done, it is not unreasonable for God to exercise His right to our lives after He ransomed us with the Blood of His own Son? If we would but survey the wondrous cross we had seen life a lot different.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/20 7:50

SETTING YOUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE (Part 24)

Returning to our text we read; *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* This is something we have to decide to do. It does not always come automatic. Yet, there is an effect that comes with surveying the cross. We need a regular time of reflection that we might *count our richest gain as loss and pour contempt on ALL our pride.*

A woman came to Jesus in terrible sin. She was broken and crushed under the enormous weight of her sins before God. She so humbled herself before the Lord that words almost can't express how grateful she was for the hope of mercy. Some stood by and didn't understand why she was so given over to Him. Jesus answered them, *Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven* (Luke 7:44-48).

This woman did not have to be coerced into worshipping or serving God. She didn't have to be begged to do something for God. She surveyed the cross (as it were) and her richest gain she counted but loss and poured contempt on all her pride.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/20 8:09

WHERE CHRIST SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD (Part 25)

Watchman Nee once asked something to the effect, "How can God take up His place as Lord lest we assume our place as servant?" Christ is sitting at the right hand of power and authority. When we set our minds on things above where Christ sitteth- we are stepping into the throne room in our hearts and predicating our lives with that Throne Room in view. In other words, the Throne Room of God is one of the variables in the equation of our life.

With one eye on the throne and one on the earth we have a right perspective for our decision making. Taking this a step further we need to recognize that our Body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6). This means that God Almighty dwells inside of us. The unfortunate thing is that the Holy Spirit is rarely given his rightful place as the Third Person of the Godhead. Some view the Holy Spirit as a 'force' or 'influence' in their lives. Others view the Holy Spirit as gifts such as tongues, prophecy, or other manifestations.

Ever notice how you act differently in the presence of people than you do in the presence of inanimate objects? Carry this over into our previous consideration; folk don't mind acting out in the presence of a 'force', 'gift' or 'influence'; but they would think twice if they knew it was a 'person' they were acting out in front of. The Holy Spirit- the PERSON is ever present with the Born Again. Not an 'all seeing eye' looking down from above, but the PERSON of God Almighty looking out from within you. Anywhere you go He is 'in-person'.

Paul had to remind those in Corinth of this truth in I Corinthians 3:16; *have ye not known that ye are a sanctuary of God, and the Spirit of God doth dwell in you?* (YLT) He is not coming and going and may show up at a inconvenient season; He is there 24/7/365.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/4/26 11:30

Is this series done? I am just wondering because I would like to put it all together when it is. The reason I ask is because I noticed you started another series.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/4/26 11:59

Hi Preach,

It is really the same series, but this one is getting so long that it is getting hard to read. Feel free to compile it if you wish. The topic is almost endless. :-)