

Insight Into



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Insight Into

General Information

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MEDITATION

“Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?”
(Ecclesiastes 7:16-17)

Rev. A. Schot
Beacon

Here the preacher is writing about adverse happenings in life. Who can make that straight which He hath made crooked? There are many things in our lives that we don't understand. If we try to understand them we will only become more stuck. But the Preacher also points to a solution.

Be not righteous over much. Often this text is explained incorrectly as “You have to watch against extremes. Don't be either too light or too heavy. Don't be either too free or too narrow-minded. Don't be either overly righteous or too wicked.” But that cannot be the right meaning. We can never be too righteous, and wickedness is never allowed.

When is a person too righteous? It is when he thinks he knows better than God, who is righteous even if we don't understand Him. When does a person have too much wisdom? It is when he wants to be wiser than God! When is someone too wicked? It is when he acts more wickedly than the ungodly. By nature, we are all wicked. Yet there is a difference between us and the world. We are not better, but we know better. IF we think and act like the world, we are already too wicked.

The Preacher warns: Why should you die before your time? To die before our time is to die at a time when we are not prepared because we have been putting death very far off.



The Prairie Fire

The Banner of Truth

A company of travelers were journeying across one of the vast American prairies. It was the time of rest, and the horses, unharnessed, were quietly grazing, while the company were employed in many different ways. One group was eagerly chatting by the side of a wagon, when all at once the guide started to his feet, gazing anxiously over the prairie, and then, turning to the company, shouted, “The prairie is on fire! Harness the horses – quick for your life!” Rapidly the order was carried out, and the heavy wagons tumbled across the prairie, the drivers lashing their steaming horses to the utmost speed. Past them flew, with the swiftness of the wind, the wild animals of the wood. Still, despite every effort, the fire gained on the travelers.

As they looked back in terror, they beheld the fierce flames licking up everything. Trees fell with a startling crash, and the air was fast becoming like the heat of a furnace. All at once the guide cried out, “Halt!” and springing from his seat, he set fire to the grass in several places immediately in front of them. It quickly cracked and blazed, fanned by the breeze, and, spreading, left behind it a blackened but cleared patch. As soon as the part thus cleared looked large enough to receive the company, the guide shouted, “Stand where the fire has been!” Immediately the party obeyed. Scarcely had they reached the charred area with their wagons and horses, then the prairie fire was upon them; but finding no grass to lay hold of, the fire parted, burned around them, and passed on, leaving them in safety.

Sinner, are you threatened with the punishment of sin, and the fiery condemnation of God’s holy law? Do you look about you for a hiding-place, and have you failed in your search? The fires are pursuing you, and gain fearfully on your pace, even while you flee with all your might. There is only one spot, sinner – I tell you truly, there is only one spot where safety is found. That spot is Calvary. Have you fled by faith to Christ crucified? Are you seeking God’s mercy? “Stand where the fire has been.” The fire of God’s wrath against the sin of His people burned once on Calvary when it consumed their Surety. Fear not, therefore, if you are sheltered there; the fire will never touch that place again. If you are there, you are safe.

Seeking Salvation When Young

Question: Did ever God punish little children for sin against Him?

Answer: Yes, when the flood came. He drown all the little children that were in the old world; He also burnt up all the little children which were in Sodom; and because one time the little children at Bethel mocked the prophet as he was going to worship God, God let loose two she-bears upon them, which tore forty and two of them to pieces.

Question: Alas! What shall we little children do?

Answer: Either go on in your sins; or “remember now your creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come.”

Question: Why do you mock us, to bid us to go on in our sins. You should pray for us, that God would save us,

Answer: I do not mock you, but only as the wise man does; and besides, I do pray for you, and with your salvation.

Question: How does the wise man mock us?

Answer: Thus: “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sigh of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgement.”

Question: What kind of mocking is this?

Answer: Such that is mixed with the greatest seriousness; as if he should say, yes, do sinners; go on in your sins if you dare; do live in your vanities; but God will have a time to judge you for them.

Question: Is not this just as when my father bids me be naughty if I will; but if I am naughty, he will spank me for it

Answer: Yes; or like that saying of Joshua, “If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, OR the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.” Serve your sins at your own peril.

Question: Is it not best then for me to serve God?

Answer: Yes; for they that serve the devil must be where he is, and they that serve God and Christ, must be where They are. John 12: 26, Matthew 25:41

~ *Bunyan's Catechism*



The reputation of the young violinist had grown to such proportions, and so many were the wild stories of his prowess, that those who considered themselves leaders in the world of music felt called upon to hear and decide for themselves.

Accordingly, there came a day when Nicolo Paganini stood face to face with a distinguished audience of critics who listened to the opening of his recital with inscrutable faces. Hardly had a few bars been played, however, before there was an ominous twang. Knitting his brow in vexation, the young virtuoso tried to cover his chagrin by continuing to play brilliantly on the three remaining strings.

Alas, ere long on, a second broken string hung limply from the neck of the instrument! Murmurs of anger arose from all parts of the auditorium. How had he dared to appear before them without assuring himself of the perfection of this instrument. The young man played on, outwardly unmoved, but sick at heart. Yet all seemed against him, for again there came a heart-breaking twang; a third string had broken.

The audience rose to its feet. Cries of rage and abuse were gurlled at the artist. The accompanist fled.

For a moment, Paganini stood, irresolute. Then, striding to the front of the platform, he waved his bow above his head and called for silence.

“Gentlemen,” he cried, “One string – and Paganini!”

Raising his sorry instrument to his chin, he began to play, and the air was filled with a lilting melody so exquisite, so ethereal, that those who

had come to scoff remained to weep for the music that had once been theirs but now was gone forever.

One string—and Paganini! One human life—and God! You may feel today that all that makes life worth living has gone; that the song has left you; that hope itself has been taken away. But there is One who out of the tangled skein of circumstances can fashion the brodered cloth; One who can take the fractured heartstrings of a shattered human life can make them vibrate as never before with the very harmony of Heaven. “If any Man be in Christ,” cried one who had proved it true, “he is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new!” “I am come,” said Jesus of Himself, “that they might have life, and have it more abundantly! ... Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

YOU are either converted or unconverted! Have you been born again? Are you a new creature? Have you put off the old man, and put on the new? Have you ever felt your sins, and repented of them? Are you looking simply to Christ for pardon and life eternal? Do you loathe heart sins, and fight against them? Do you long for perfect holiness, and follow hard after it? Have you come out from the world? Do you enjoy the Bible? Do you give time to prayer? Do you love the people of God? Do you try and do good to the world? Are you unworthy in your own eyes, and willing to take the lowest place? Are you a Christian in business and on weekdays and by your own fireside? Oh, think on these things, and then you will better tell the state of your soul!

~ *Emergency Post*

If your sins, reader, have been remitted by Christ, then you can join with us in praise for His great love. But if you are depending upon the works which you have done to gain acceptance before God and the remission of your sins, then the love of Christ means nothing to you. All of this is utter foolishness, for you are clinging to the robes of your own self-righteousness, and what tattered robes these are! May grace be given today to convict you of your unrighteousness, strip you of all your religious performances, and bring you down into the dust of repentance, pleading that God would be merciful to you for Christ's sake. Then the love of Christ will appear to be wonderful in your case.

- Wylie W. Fulton
The Gospel Witness



The Rain That Opened the Church Doors

The following true story is told by Stephen Benkov, who has recently been delivered from behind the Iron Curtain to freedom in America.

There was a certain area behind the Iron Curtain where the churches were closed in 1964 by communist order. The Believers had no choice but to meet in homes and underground meetings. In 1967, a great drought struck their area, and tragedy loomed ahead. Fruit trees, for which the area was well known, began to die. Gardens dried up, crops were lost, and there was scarcely any drinking water, and the water had to be rationed. The area faced eminent danger from the worst drought in the history of the area.

At the peak of the drought, when there had been no rain for six months, a Christian woman who worshipped in the underground churches went to the local communist officer in the area. She asked, “Do you know who I am?”

He replied, “I am not sure.”

She replied, “I am a Believer in Jesus Christ. You have closed our church doors and we have no place to worship, but I believe in Christ. I propose that if you will open our church doors for three days, the Christians will gather and pray for rain during these three days. If there is rain in answer to our prayers, you must agree to open our church doors for us to worship.”

The communist officer looked at her and exclaimed, “Do you really believe what you are saying to me?”

She replied, “Yes, I do. I believe our Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

The communist officer thought to himself that he had nothing to lose, and it would be a good joke to laugh over to break the strain the communists had been under.

He laughed and said, “Yes, go ahead and see if your God will hear you.”

The communist gave an order and the police opened the church door. All the Believers of the village gathered a few hours later to begin to

pray for rain. One of the Believers later explained that there was a great uncertainty in the hearts of the Believers. What if God did not answer them? They would be the laughing stock of the area.

As some of the Believers looked through the window of the church building, they saw the woman who had gone to the communist officer coming towards the church. All the Believers looked out the window in amazement at the object she had in her hand. They looked close and found it was an umbrella. When she came into the church the Believers asked her, “Why do you bring an umbrella?”

She replied, “I don’t believe we’re going to get rain tomorrow, I believe our God is going to hear our prayers and give us rain today.”

All the Believers got on their knees and began to pray. They prayed for many hours, and as they were all poor and had no watches, they lost track of time. They prayed, “Oh God, give us rain to show as a witness that Thou art God.”

After many hours of praying, one of the Believers looked out the window and the skies were dark, the atmosphere absolutely still, just as it is before a torrential rain.

All of the sudden the first drop hit the tin roof of the church with a loud noise, and suddenly a deafening roar of a torrential rainstorm fell. The Believers gathered around the windows and began to rejoice and praise God that He had heard their prayers. But after praising God for a while a few of the Believers prepared to leave, but they could not leave as it was raining so hard

Only this one woman who had brought her umbrella could leave. She left and went straight to the offices of the communist officer and she told Pastor Bankov later, “I felt so strong in God that I didn’t bother knocking on the door or coming into the presence of the communists in a humble manner, but barged right in.”

Inside she found the communist officer and his aides at the window looking at the rain coming down, and slapping each other on the back, happy that the drought was broken. The Christian woman walked toward them and asked, “What is it you are looking at?” They replied, “We are looking at the rain falling down.”

She replied, “Oh no, you are not – you are looking at the glory of our God falling down, for He has heard our prayers, and it is we despised Christians who have prayed, and God has heard our prayers.”

She went on and witnessed to that roomful of communists and told them of the goodness and glory, and reality of God. After that day the church was allowed open, and the local communist officer and his aides showed the greatest respect of the Believers of this area.

~ Underground Evangelism Magazine



M. Luther Hux

“What do you think about gearing our ministry to the youth?” asked a pastor of another persuasion as we met by providence the other day in a nearby shopping center. After a moment’s reflection, I responded to his sudden query with, “Yes, certainly, that is, if you mean by your question to do our best in trying to understand them, loving them and sincerely seeking to meet their need with a faithful application of God’s word.”

Upon hearing my brief reply, my friend politely excused himself to go and tend to some business. Whether or not he was pleased with my answer, I cannot say; because he didn’t say yea and he didn’t say nay. He just left without expressing approval or disapproval. One thing I regret about that meeting, however, is that I did not detain him long enough to press him for his meaning of gearing our ministry to the youth; because since that day my friend’s question has been ringing in my ears like the annoying sounds of a scratched record, repeating his question over and over and over again.

And then, I thought perhaps I could silence this scratchy record by asking myself some questions of my own, and thus put an end once and for all to its displeasing sound.

First, I ask What prompted my friend’s question? Was he simply expressing subconsciously a fear that his ministry was inadequate to meet the need of the youth of our time? Was it a fear that not being sufficiently pleased with his ministry the youth would seek another place of worship with the hope of finding better comfort or entertainment, or whatever the youth are seeking today? Or, was the dear brother speaking from a heart plagued with misgivings concerning the example of ministry – the message and method which our Lord and His apostle established for the servants of God of all time?

Then, I would ask, HOW would one gear his ministry to the youth, that is, if one should attempt such a task? Would the message be altered or the purpose of the ministry be changed? Would the youth be told that they are sinners, and that they are sinners just as bad as the Bible says they are: that

their hearts are “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” that in themselves they are “without hope and without God in the world” and that they must repent and turn from their sins in submission to the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ or perish? Would the minister go lightly in speaking of God’s wrath which He has revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and proclaim long and loudly a god that is all love? Would the sermon be designed to flatter the youth in their sins with the occasional throwing in of a batch of popular music to please their pleasure-craving nature? And when the message is thus designed, is the minister together with his audience to be gullible enough to believe that a message made acceptable to this world is the gospel?

Further, I would inquire, as I put these questions to myself, is not the purpose of the ministry now the same as it was when the apostle Paul admonished the young preacher Timothy to ... *“behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth”*? (1 Tim. 3:15). And may we think that we can change that purpose without bringing the wrath of God down upon our own heads? Can anyone scripturally condemn good sport, clean social activity or proper entertainment not indulged to excess? No. But are those things within the area of the purpose of ministry?

Did Paul say, “The church is the pillar and ground of social activity?” or “The church is the pillar and ground of athletic endeavor?” or “The church is the pillar and ground of entertainment?” He said, “The church is the pillar and ground of THE TRUTH,” didn’t he? Well, what is the great need of the youth today? It is THE TRUTH, isn’t it? And is there anyone so ignorant as to deny that the biggest trouble with today’s youth is that they have not been exposed to THE TRUTH? When has the youth of today had pressed upon them the truth about Man’s sin, God’s wrath, the requirement of His holy law, the judgement, the necessity of repentance, the atonement and the absolute need of the new creation? True, today much sweet mouthing about these has been uttered, but has any of it come within a thousand miles of the Bible’s teaching? So far, THE TRUTH has been perverted or withheld that today’s youth are ignorant even of the three elemental “R’s” of truth: Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God. Is it not tragic that they have been given everything but the one thing needful? May we then entertain for one moment the slightest hope that any other message than the message of the living God proclaimed in power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit will do sinner - whether young or old – any permanent good?

The final question which I ask myself in regard to the proposition as

to whether we should gear our ministry to the youth is a terrible one. God grant that we shall have the right answer to this one. It is this, Are you really concerned about the eternal good of the youth, or is your concern actually directed towards schemes and devices of men which will aid you in keeping up an appearance of success before the world? A terrifying question indeed! But I must honestly face it – for face it I must, either now or in this world or then in that dreadful day when the secrets of all hearts will be made manifest. If honestly putting this question to our hearts now makes us tremble lest we have some hidden personal ulterior motive in the ministry of our Lord, what inexpressible and appalling feelings shall be ours then when we must confront our Lord to give an account of ourselves!

I don't know what my friend would say in answer to all these questions had I detained him longer. And perhaps you are wondering why I don't look him up and put the questions directly to him. The reason is because that would be impossible, for, you see, when my friend parted company with me and I saw him go out of sight among the crowd, I awoke; lo, it was a dream.

To the youth: Although I am deeply conscious of my failure to manifest my love for you, yet I confess that I do love you with a love so strong that I believe I would dare tell you the TRUTH, withholding none of God's counsel from you, even if I knew by doing so you would shun from now on my presence. It is my ambition for Christ's sake to lovingly and faithfully preach to you the whole truth and trust the Lord to apply it in grace to your hearts, making you faithful children of His.

I therefore counsel you to put yourself under the faithful ministry of God's word at all costs. Listen not to what those pretenders who would trim God's message, who would allow you to rest in a false comfort. Rather bare your soul before the Lord, pleading Him to apply His saving truth to you, regardless of how piercing, painful and humbling it may be; because unless He is pleased to wound and break your sinful, stubborn, and proud heart and give you a new heart, you shall perish in your sins. Make sure you do not allow your heart to be comforted with anything until you can say from the depth of your being –

“Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
‘Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”
“Hoard up His sacred Word,
And feed thereon and grow;
Go on to seek to know the Lord,
And practice what you know.”



The Providence of God: Thoughts Adopted From À Brakel

Insight Into Editors

God's providence is the execution of what He has decreed in eternity. Throughout scripture, His providence over all things is abundantly evident.

1. Consider His provision of the ram caught in the thicket just when Abraham was ready to slay Isaac. Just at the crisis of that moment, Abraham was told, "*Lay not thine hand upon the lad... for now I know that thou fearest God*" (Genesis 22:12).

2. Consider God's provision of the ark when the entire earth would be covered with water. This provided safety for both the human race, of which eight were preserved, and the animals that would reinhabit the earth.

3. Consider the deliverance of Peter, just a few hours before he would be executed by the bloody arm of Herod. While the Christians were praying for Peter a short distance from prison, God sent his angel to be a means of his deliverance. A light suddenly appeared in the prison. Peter was woken up while the guards slept, his chains fell off his hands, he girded his coat, and he followed the angel out of the prison. What wonderful provisions (Acts 12)!

4. Consider God's provision of His Son as a means to deliver all His children over all of time. Who can utter the depth of this provision? "*And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him*" (Isaiah 59:16). Marveling at this wonder is the song of heaven itself!

God's providence demonstrates the omnipotent power of God. By His providence, He brings to pass exactly what He has decreed, be it ever so impossible from man's perspective. How would Mary, about to have a

child, ever end up in Bethlehem? To accomplish this, the world was turned upside down when Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that all people must return to the location from which their ancestors originated.

God's providence demonstrates the omnipresent power of God. À Brakel says, "This power of God penetrates the existence of every creature...and affects the ultimate outcome of all things." This power should be evident to us from most minute atoms, all the way to the grand universe. Job expressed this fact when he stated, "*But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of air, and they shall tell thee... Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?*" (Job 12:7&9).

His providence is seen all around us in every object. All things are made by Him and maintained by Him. Do you wonder how the little birds survive the biting cold of winter? He maintains them! All the order we see in the universe, including the orderly movement of the planets, is His providence. The exact time the sun, moon, and stars arise can all be perfectly predicted because of the ordering of His creation! "*Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth*" (Isaiah 40:26).

God's providence is seen in His gracious condescension as He answers the prayers of those in need. How could it be possible that such a great King would answer the prayers of tiny people who breathe a silent cry for help? Yet, how often has this been fulfilled? What a wonder this is, because we live in a world where needs are very overwhelming. "*Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul*" (Psalm 142:4b). And then? "*I cried unto thee, O LORD; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living*" (Psalm 142:5). How unsearchable are His providences, and His ways are past finding out!

God's providence can be seen in three special ways: Namely, preservation, cooperation, and government. Let us briefly examine each:

1. Preservation: God gives life to all His creatures. "*In Him was life; and the life was the light of men*" (John 1:4). Life is His to give or to withdraw, at which time a creature ceases to live. He gives life to plants and then nourishes them with the means of sunlight. He gives life to animals and then nourishes them with raw materials for the maintenance of this life. "*He giveth to the beast his food, and to the ravens which cry*" (Psalm 147:9). "Life" is something non-physical; it is a God-given quality.

God gives “life” to His physical creatures who are utterly dependent upon Him. In the Psalter, we sing, “Thy Spirit O Lord makes life to abound,” which reminds us where life comes from. At times, God has given life without the use of means, as when Moses was upon Mount Sinai, with no food or water for 40 days.

2. Cooperation: Creatures were not made as mindless robots. God empowers His creatures to behave in the unique manner they have been created with. Every creature’s activity comes about by the influence of God’s power. À Brakel says, “God energizes his creatures by a wise, sovereign, and special cooperative act, in which His activity precedes the activity of every creature, thus determining the time, location, and manner of activity, while preserving the creature in his motions until the act has been performed.” How utterly dependent we are upon Him. How sad that we, who are so dependent upon a good-doing God, choose to violate His commandments by our willful disobedience!

3. Government: God governs all things in the world to the minutest detail, for “*the Lord reigneth*” (Psalm 93:1). This includes all living things, both man and animals. This includes all non-living things, such as heavenly bodies, weather, sunshine, and drought. God, the Creator of all, is the Governor of the tiny sparrows, the hairs on our head, and the shoes on our feet. This reminds me of a boy with special needs, who, after a sermon, said to the minister in broken English, “God great, God great.”

Every human is responsible for his or her actions. If we misuse the energy we are given for sin, then we must give an account for this. “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Our choice of sin demonstrates our depravity and is not a result of God’s coercion. Many have been given over to their heart’s desire, filling the cup of iniquity until they are destroyed (see Genesis 15:16b). How cognizant the Psalmist was of his dependency upon God’s restraining hand: “*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous (willful) sins*” (Psalm 19:13a). We also find this in Psalm 51:10b: “*Renew a right spirit within me.*” And in Psalm 51:11, we read, “*Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*” How fearfully we witness the progression of sin in Judas, Herod, Pharaoh, and Saul. These men were also under the providence of God and received life, function, and being from His good hand, but they chose to misuse His gifts (see Acts 17:25b).

Conclusion

Everything is governed by God. His providence is the execution of what He has decreed. God generally uses means to fulfill His decrees. He has also bound us to means. He has commanded us to seek Him for the fulfillment of our natural and spiritual needs. Paul preached and wrote many epistles, but he realized He was utterly dependent upon God to bless these means for the spiritual well-being of his hearers. Paul can plant, and Apollos can water, but God must give the increase (based on 1 Corinthians 3:6). Likewise, how dependent we are upon Him. Without a diligent use of means, we cannot expect a blessing naturally or spiritually.

À Brakel points out that if we are unconverted, we cannot receive comfort from God's providence. How can such a one receive comfort when God is against him? The benefits of God's providence are for the children of God, for they belong to Him. À Brakel says, "Come therefore, all you who mourn greatly, inwardly, and continually over sin; who continually flee to the Lord Jesus to be justified by His blood; who yearn for communion with God; whose desire is to love, fear, and obey the Lord." He counsels such to see God's hand in all the events that transpire in their lives. Various providences of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, etc., are times to pray for light so one might be attentive to His Hand in all things. "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is*" (Jeremiah 17:7).

"Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

~ Matthew 5:44

Mere reformation differs just as much from regeneration as whitewashing an old rotten house differs from taking it down and building anew.

~ Toplady



“I Want to be MYSELF!”

Author Unknown

A young person recently said, “I just want to be myself!” Under certain circumstances such a statement would be proper, if properly qualified. For instance, one does not want to live by another’s convictions all the time but wants to realize convictions as his own. Or, a person naturally would not want to follow a career or a life-long course mapped out by someone else but would want to chart his own future, in keeping with his own desires and talents, by the leadership of God. (Prov. 3:6)

If, however, this young person was somewhat rebellious and simply meant that what was wanted was for all restraint to be lifted just so he could follow his own natural bent, then this is a “horse of a different color.”

The cry of the age is for SELF-expression. Lift all bars. Pull all stops. Release all brakes. **JUST BE YOURSELF.** Do what you want to do that you think will make you happy and “fulfilled.” Do not suppress your feelings or natural drives and appetites. **JUST BE YOURSELF,** they say.

This is satanic and leads to moral debauchery. It is moral, mental, physical and spiritual **SUICIDE!** Man without restraints is a million times worse than an animal.

Every human being is **RESPONSIBLE** before God. He is responsible to abide by his God-given conscience. He is responsible to obey God’s Word which has been given him. You are **NOT** free to say **NO** to God! You may rebel and say ‘no,’ but not without harming and destroying yourself.

If, for example, you have been living under someone’s authority (such as parents) who have insisted that you live by their convictions, and you now have become of age to leave their roof and accept the responsibilities of “doing it alone,” does this mean you are free to do as you please? If you are no longer under parental authority where Christian convictions abound in the home, does this mean you are free to live a life **VOID** of convictions? Does this mean you are free to just be your**SELF**?

No. We are yet and always will be responsible to God. His Word remains unchanged. We may not see it exactly like someone else, but we are responsible to follow its precepts. We are **RESPONSIBLE** to live a holy, God-fearing life, whether we do so or not.

And, I have news for you. I would hope you really do **NOT WANT** to be yourself. I mean your own, real, natural, carnal self. For this “self” is

desperately wicked. Really. *“The heart [that is, your natural nature which would guide your actions] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”* (Jer. 17:9). Would you want such a heart to be left unrestrained to be itSELF?

You see, without the restraining grace of God, man’s natural self is turned in such a way that *“every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [is] only evil continually”* (Gen. 6:6). Do you want this? *“The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth”* (Gen. 8:21).

No, I don’t think you really want to be YOURSELF. This would mean that you would not want to be under the authority of the LORD God Who made you. This would mean that you would want to do just “what comes naturally.” And what would this be? The Lord Jesus, the Creator Who made all things, says, *“Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man”* (Matt. 15:19, 20a). In other words, your natural SELF is everything BAD and nothing GOOD.

“. . . filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water” (Job 15:16).

To be your own SELF, with no restraining force, recognizing no authority over you, is to be carnally minded. And *“to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God...”* (Rom. 8:6, 7). *“So then they that are in the flesh [that is, your own natural SELF] cannot please God”* (Rom. 8:8).

God has declared that we are all sinners. We all come short of His glory. There is NONE righteous. We are all polluted and plagued with sin. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, came down to earth to DIE and to SAVE His people from their sins. The Mighty One came to seek and to save the LOST SINNERS. He declares, *“He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24).

To those wretched, wicked, evilly polluted children of wrath for whom Christ died, hear His precious voice graciously announce: *“And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live”* (Ezek. 16:6). The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, *“in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* (Eph. 1:7).

May you LOSE yourself in Him, thus finding your real life, even the salvation of your soul. To him who hears, *“shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”* (Heb. 9:14).

Neglect of a Child

By Protestant Action

A story is told of a young man who stood at the bar of justice to be sentenced for forgery. The judge had known the young man from childhood, for his father had been a famous legal light and his work on the Law of Trusts was the most exhaustive work on the subject. “Do you remember your father,” asked the judge sternly, “that father whom you have disgraced?”

The prisoner answered, “I remember him perfectly. When I went to him for advice or companionship, he would look up from his book on the Law of Trusts and say, ‘Run away, boy, I am busy.’ My father finished his book, and here I am.” The great lawyer had neglected his own great trust with awful results.



“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

~ Proverbs 25:11