

2 Corinthians - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 11 (9:10)

THE seed, we are told, is the Word. Sown in faith, the results may not be seen immediately but the harvest is sure, for God has declared His word shall not return unto Him void. Many a tender gospel message has seemed to fall upon deaf ears, but in after days there has come back to some who heard words that seemed to have been completely ignored or utterly forgotten. So the laborer is to work on, sowing in hope, trusting that God will give the seed to germinate and to bear fruit for His glory in time to come. To a discouraged evangelist an aged brother exclaimed, "Many a one will die easier for what he has heard tonight!"

—W. J. H. Brealey.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 10 (8:9)

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"— 2 Corinthians 8:9.

A CHRISTIAN, challenged by a Unitarian to produce a solitary passage of Scripture to prove that Jesus had any existence before He was born of Mary, quoted this verse. The other objected that it had no bearing on the question at issue. The Christian replied, "But the text says, 'He was rich.' Was He ever rich on earth? When was He rich?" The position is unanswerable if one believes the Bible to be the Word of God. Jesus was never rich on earth. But He was rich in the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. What riches were His! And He gave all up and became poor in order that bankrupt sinners might be made wealthy for Eternity. He who trusts in Him is made heir to all the riches of glory which the Father delights to share with all who come to Him and accept His grace.

—H. A. I.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 9 (7:1)

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" —2 Corinthians 7:1.

CARELESS habits and unholy ways are inconsistent with the truth of the new creation. God has given us exceeding great and precious promises, and because of His goodness we owe it to Him to judge in ourselves every tendency to unholiness, whether in body or mind. Once we walked according to the lust of the flesh and of the mind. Now we are called to walk in the Spirit that we may not fulfill these unclean desires. "Perfecting holiness" suggests growth, which should be continuous. As we are daily occupied with Christ and walk in the Spirit, reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, we shall detect the least beginnings of evil. If these are judged and confessed immediately, we shall be kept from sin's power, and as we go on in faith we shall enjoy unclouded fellowship with God.

Daily Sacrifice, February 26 (6:8-9)

"Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for My name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house"— 2 Chronicles 6:8, 9.

DAVID'S desire to build a house for the Lord was recognized by God as good, and Nathan the prophet agreed at once that it would be an excellent thing to do. But both he and David had to learn that God's thoughts are oftentimes different from those of the best and most well-intentioned men. David was not to build the house. That was to be the work of his son Solomon. This, however, did not cool his zeal or cause him to be less interested in the project. He manifested a truly subject spirit, and in his prayer, as he sat before the Lord (2 Sam. 7:18-29), he gave vent to his deep appreciation of the grace God had shown toward him,

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 8 (5:20)

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"— 2 Corinthians 5:20.

"AMBASSADORS for Christ." This is the title Paul gives to those who seek to carry out our Lord's instruction as to evangelizing the nations. While our Saviour Himself is personally in Heaven, seated on the right hand of the divine Majesty (Heb. 1:3), we are called to represent Him in this world, going to rebels against the authority of the God of Heaven and earth, and pleading with them to be reconciled to Him who sent His Son in grace that all men might through Him have life and peace. We are unfaithful representatives indeed if we fail to respond to the command laid upon us, and allow our fellowmen to perish in their sins unwarned and knowing not the way of life.

This is the first great business of every member of the Church of the living God. All are called to be witnesses, according to their measure. It is ours to "go" (vs. 19), to "pray" (Matt. 9:38), and to help send forth (Acts 13:3) and sustain those who are able to leave home and friends as they hasten forth into distant lands to carry the gospel to the regions beyond (3 John 6-8).

Daily Sacrifice, September 8 (5:17)

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"
—2 Corinthians 5:17.

THE old creation was placed on trial in Adam, its federal head. When he failed we all fell, in him and with him. The new creation stands forever secure in Christ, its Head, who bore the judgment entailed by Adam's fall and the sins of his race. It is in resurrection that the Lord Jesus became head of this new order which eventually shall supersede the old completely. God will never be satisfied until He brings in "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Then all things in heaven and in earth will be reconciled unto Himself and God will be all in all. Who can estimate aright the glories that He is yet to reveal to those who through His infinite grace, have their part in this new creation where sin will never again be permitted to lift up its ugly head. It is in this sphere that "all things are of God." Everything that is of Adam will pass away. All that is of Christ will abide for eternity, to the glory of God and the blessing of His saints.

—J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, September 7 (5:16)

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh" —2 Corinthians 5:16.

IN thinking of man, it is easy to go to one of two extremes: either to look upon him as a majestic being ever moving onward and upward by his own innate power and increasing wisdom, or to think of him as so utterly depraved that he is deprived of all sense of responsibility, and so is but an automaton under the control of forces which he is powerless to resist.

Scripture presents man as the highest of God's earthly creation, who lost his place of pre-eminence through sin, but who is still the object of God's love and is capable of being renewed through grace and given the place of son in the family of God.

As all are involved in one common ruin, we are not to despise any, but, recognizing the fact that Christ died for all, we are to consider every man as a potential saint, for none are so far from God but that there is salvation for them if they turn to Him in repentance, and trust the Saviour He has provided.

—Hawker.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 7 (4:6-7)

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"—2 Cor. 4:6, 7.

OUR minds are carried back in these verses to the time when God said, "Let there be light," and dispelled the darkness of the primeval chaotic world, and then to that incident related in the book of Judges where Gideon's army went to battle against the Midianites with a sword in one hand and a lamp hidden in a pitcher in the other. At Gideon's command they broke the earthen vessels and the lights shone out striking terror to the hearts of the enemy who could not account for the crash and the blaze of light in the midnight hour. So we who are saved, having been turned from darkness to light, now have the responsibility of shining for God in this world. But in order that this may be, these earthen vessels of our humanity must be broken. Then others can behold the light.

—Mary Bowley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 6 (3:18)

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" —2 Corinthians 3:18.

THE secret of Christian holiness is heart-occupation with Christ Himself. As we gaze upon Him we become like Him. Do you want to be holy? Spend much time in His presence. Let the loveliness of the Risen Lord so fill the vision of your soul that all else is shut out. Then the things of the flesh will shrivel up and disappear and the things of the Spirit will become supreme in your life. We do not become holy by looking into our own hearts. There we only find corruption. But as we look away from self altogether, "looking off unto Jesus," as He is the object in which we delight, as we contemplate His holiness, purity, love, and compassion, His devotion to the Father's will, we shall be transformed, imperceptibly to ourselves, perhaps, but none the less surely, into His blessed image. There is no other way whereby we may become practically holy, and be delivered from the power of the flesh and of the principles of the world.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 5 (2:14)

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place" —2 Corinthians 2:14.

ANOTHER translation reads, "God which always leadeth us in Christ's triumph." He, the mighty conqueror, has come forth from the battle with Satan at the cross, leading His foes in chains at His chariot-wheels. He has spoiled principalities and powers and annulled him that had the power of death, that He might deliver us, and now we who have been delivered from captivity to sin and Satan march with Him in His triumphal procession sweeping onwards to the glory of God which we are destined to share in all the ages to come. But as we journey on we are privileged to tell abroad the gospel of His grace which rises up to God as fragrant incense, to His praise and honor. Whether men heed the message or reject it, God is glorified as we proclaim the story and tell out His love to a ruined world.

—J. G. Deck.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 4 (1:3-4)

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" —2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

THE God of all comfort! How our troubled hearts respond to such words as these. He who has manifested Himself in the cross as the God of all grace meeting every need of our souls when distressed by a sense of guilt, now makes Himself known as the source of all consolation when we are troubled by the sorrows of the way and in danger of being cast down because of burdens that seem too heavy to bear. It is noteworthy that every person of the Holy Trinity is engaged in this gracious ministry. Here it is the Father who is the God of all comfort. Both the Son and the Spirit are designated as Comforters. The word for "Advocate" in 1 John 2:1 is the same as that which the Lord uses in John, chapter 14 to 16, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, who is "another Comforter." It is for God's tried saints to find their solace in Him and so to share with others the comfort He gives.

—J. Denson Smith.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 12 (12:9)

"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" —2 Corinthians 12:9.

PAUL pleaded thrice for deliverance from the sharp thorn that caused such suffering. But at last the answer can in a way he had not looked for. The Lord said, as it were, "No, Paul; I will not remove the thorn, but I will give you grace to endure." And this moved the apostle to glory in his very infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Happy the soul that has learned the folly of striving against the permissive will of God, and can receive all at His hand and look to Him for strength to endure. It was this that enabled Job to triumph as he cried, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?"

Daily Sacrifice, September 9 (11:2)

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" —2 Corinthians 11:2.

WRITING to the Corinthian church Paul says, "I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto Christ."

It is after we enter with Him into the Father's house that the marriage of the Lamb will take place. The Church will be displayed in robes of glory and beauty as the Bride of the Lamb. Saints of all ages will share the felicity of the marriage supper which speaks of joyous fellowship in which all heavenly saints participate, but the center of that scene of bliss will be He who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

—Mrs. A. R. Cousins.

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