

Ephesians - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 26 (6:1-3)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” —Ephesians 6:1-3.

RESPECT for and obedience to parents is the foundation of all society. Children who are rebellious and unsubject in the home will be impatient of control and enemies of orderly government when they grow older. More than that, if they do not obey their parents in early days, they will not obey God in later years. This is why some consider that the Fifth Commandment really belongs to the first table of the Law rather than to the second. The first table sets forth man's responsibility to God, the second his responsibility to his neighbor. In childhood our parents stand in the place of God. We learn His mind through them, if they themselves are subject to His Word. In this our blessed Lord is, as in all other things, our great Exemplar. He who brought all things into existence by the word of His power voluntarily took the place of a child in a Jewish home and honored the Law by being subject to Mary His mother, and to Joseph His foster father. Young Christians need to remember that they honor God by honoring their parents.

Daily Sacrifice, September 20 (6:18)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” — Ephesians 6:18.

THE Holy Spirit is the power for prayer. We can only pray in the Spirit as we walk in the Spirit. This explains why the prayer-life is with many, so unsatisfactory, and answers to prayer are so seldom known. When the Spirit of God is grieved by our self-will or disobedience, there will be no liberty in prayer. When we present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, determined that He shall have His way in all things, we will find the Spirit free to enlarge our hearts, illumine our minds, and lead out our thoughts in prayer in a way previously unknown.

—Barbara Cornet Ryberg.

Daily Sacrifice, September 19 (6:12)

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” — Ephesians 6:12.

OUR conflict in this age of grace is not, as Israel's was in the past, with adversaries of flesh and blood. We do not draw the sword to destroy the opponents of our Lord and His gospel. But we fight with the sword of the Spirit against spiritual powers of evil—the unholy forces that would, if they could, nullify our testimony by leading us into things that bring dishonor upon the name of Him whose we are and whom we serve (Acts 27:23).

—Wm. F. Sherwin.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 25 (5:31-32)

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” — Ephesians 5:31, 32.

THE union of one man and one woman and the faithfulness of each to the other for life is the Christian ideal of the marriage relationship. Whether human laws accord with this or whether they legalize its violation, the divine principle remains. Yet it is appalling how lightly even professed Christians and members of evangelical churches often look upon wedlock. We need not be surprised to find that selfish worldling's flout the sacredness of the home and make and break conjugal ties to suit their whims and desires. But it is pitiable when those who know that God Himself has chosen the married state to picture the union of Christ and His redeemed ones, seek the aid of the world's courts to dissolve a relationship which, once entered into, can only be broken by disobedience to the Word of God. The violation of the Seventh Commandment is the only ground given by our Lord for one to “put away his wife... and... marry another” (Matt. 19:9). Divorce and re-marriage, apart from this, is to incur the condemnation of the Lord, and such a union is denominated adultery. Of course, where this took place before conversion, all is wiped out by the blood of Christ, and if saved in this condition each party is to “abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (1 Cor. 7:20). Every marriage union is intended to portray the relationship between Christ and His own.

—I. Watts.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 24 (5:20)

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” —Ephesians 5:20.

THE redeemed of the Lord should ever be praising Him who has saved us in His rich grace and who lavishes upon us evidence after evidence of His Fatherly love and care. An unthankful child of God is a strange anomaly. Praise should ever be welling up in the hearts of those who recognize their constant indebtedness to the divine mercy and compassion. We should worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction. When tempted to doubt and fear, begin to praise God for past mercies, and faith will be increased.

Daily Sacrifice, September 18 (5:1)

THE Holy Spirit, a divine Person, has been sent to earth by the Father and Son (John 14:16; 15:26) to guide the Church through this present scene. All believers are born of the Spirit and baptized by Him into Christ's Body. He indwells them individually and is the One who reveals the truth, makes Christ precious, and enables them to triumph daily over all the power of the enemy. All believers have the Holy Spirit thus dwelling in them, but it is another thing to be filled with the Spirit. He wants to have complete control of the life, that every thought may be conformed to the obedience of Christ. As we yield ourselves unto God in true surrender, and reckon ourselves dead to sin in the death of Christ, the Holy Spirit becomes the power for holiness and guards us from the evil that is in the world.

—Harriet Auber.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 23 (4:28)

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” —Ephesians 4:28.

HE who fails to distinguish between “thine” and “mine” has not learned the first principle of integrity in human relations. There is no communism sanctioned by the Bible except that voluntary sharing which at the beginning of the Christian era was practiced for a time by the persecuted believers in Christ, who said not that ought they possessed was their own, but distributed as every man had need. Such a system was never obligatory, nor is it practical at all times. Respect for the rights of the individual and the recognition of the sacredness of property lie at the base of all reputable government. These fundamentals were insisted on in the law given at Sinai and confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry as well as by the Holy Spirit afterward. To ignore them is fatal and means the downfall of ordered society. The intelligent Christian will stand firmly against the atheistic and ruinous systems of Marxian socialism and communism, not because of selfishness, but because of conscience toward God and respect for the rights of his fellow-men.

Daily Sacrifice, September 17 (4:4-6)

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” — Ephesians 4:4-6.

THE Church of God is defined as “the fellowship of His Son” in 1 Corinthians 1:9. This Church is composed only of those who have personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They alone constitute “the Church, which is His Body” (Eph. 1:22, 23). This Body was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12, 13). It is therefore the communion, or fellowship, of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). It is He who unites believers and gives them to enjoy the precious things of Christ. It is therefore incumbent on us, as Christians, to endeavor to keep (which implies, to manifest) “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). This unity is sevenfold, as indicated in the verses quoted above. It is not a sectarian unity, nor a question of loyalty to some one particular denomination. It is the recognition of all Christians everywhere as members of Christ and hence of one another.

Charles Wesley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 22 (3:14-15)

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” — Ephesians 3:14, 15.

PAUL locates the whole redeemed family in two places. They are either in heaven or on earth. This is the death-blow to the Romish idea of purgatory—a third state between heaven and hell. And it is also the perfect answer to soul-sleep theories of every kind. Paul does not say, “The whole family in the grave and on earth.” He declares they are either in heaven or on earth. This agrees with many other Scriptures. Our

loved ones in Christ, when they leave this scene are, at once, “absent from the body, present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5). They depart to be with Christ, as Paul says in Philippians 1. It is only the tired, weary bodies of the saints that sleep until the resurrection morn when the dead will be raised and the living changed.

—J. Montgomery

Daily Sacrifice, September 16 (3:17-19)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” — Ephesians 3:17-19.

“TO know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” This seems paradoxical. How can one know that which is beyond knowledge? Just as a babe knows its mother’s love, but cannot understand the reason for that maternal affection, so we know we are the objects of the love of Christ, but we cannot fathom His reasons for so loving us. As we ponder and appropriate these precious things, we are filled—not exactly “with”—but into precious “all the fullness of God,” just as a basin might be placed on the sand as the tide comes in. It would soon be filled into all the fullness of the ocean, even though its capacity was but small.

“God loveth thee—then be contents

Whate’er thou hast, His love hath seat:

Come pain or pleasure, good or ill.

His love is round about thee still.

Then murmur not, nor anxious be,

Rest thou in peace, God loveth thee!

God loveth thee. Though dark the night,

His smile shall make thy pathway bright,

When weary ways before thee lie,

The Lord, thy helper, draweth nigh.

Press bravely on, the end to sees

Be not dismayed, God loveth thee.”

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 21 (2:14)

“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” — Ephesians 2:14.

CHRIST Himself, crucified, risen, now exalted to God’s right hand in glory, is our peace. On the cross He made peace by the shedding of His blood. Ere returning to heaven He said “Peace be unto you.” Now, “being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). He undertook to settle the sin-question by making expiation for iniquity. God is satisfied with His finished work. When the Father raised His Son from the dead He bore witness to the perfection of His work. Now the troubled soul looks up to the Throne, by the eye of faith, and sees the Man who was once on the tree, forsaken of God, crowned with honor and glory. He could not be there if the sin-question had not been disposed of. So the believer can exultingly say, “He is my peace.”

—H. Boner.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 20 (2:10)

“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” — Ephesians 2:10.

TWICE this word, here translated “workmanship” is used in the epistles of Paul. In Romans 1:20 it is translated “things that are made.” It is the Greek word poima, from which we get our English word “poem.” A poem is a well-constructed literary piece, the work of a master mind. In Romans 1 we see the creation as God’s great epic poem. In Ephesians 2 we have the poem of redemption.

Each saved one is, so to speak, a syllable in this great masterpiece, this marvelous poem, that tells out, as nothing else could, the wondrous wisdom and grace of God. How lyrical should be our lives as we enter into and appreciate this!

—Ryland.

Daily Sacrifice, September 15 (2:4,7)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” — Ephesians 2:4, 7.

THE Ephesian believers were like all others who are saved by grace. In their natural state they were away from God and dead to spiritual realities. Awakened and led to trust in Christ, they became members of His Body and were sealed by the Holy Spirit. Unable to save themselves by good works, they were now called to walk in good works as an evidence of the reality of the new life God had given to them. Grace does not do away with responsibility, but puts it in its right place.

God sees all believers as linked with Christ in His resurrection and now associated with Him in His glory. It is representation here. We are seated in Him. Some day we shall be seated with Him. “Heavenly places” is the Canaan of the new dispensation—our inheritance in Christ.

—G. W. Frazer.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 19 (1:4)

“He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” — Ephesians 1:4.

It is a striking fact, often overlooked by zealous controversialists that, in Scripture, no one is ever said to be elected or predestinated to go to heaven. Nor of course, are people ever said to be predestinated to be lost, or reprobated before birth to eternal ruin. On the contrary we who are saved are said to be chosen beforehand unto holiness and blamelessness before God, and predestinated to become like Christ the first-born of many brethren, This is blessed indeed. It should be a comfort and an encouragement, when conscious of weakness and failure, to know that I am yet to be wholly conformed to the image of God's Son. No power on earth or in hell can hinder the completion of God's purpose of grace.

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