

GET JESUS' VIEWPOINT

(By Rev. Charles V. Fairbairn)

"Therefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more and more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal". (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

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To look to the past alone is token of senility. To look at the present alone leads to despondency. To look to the future is the habit of youth. To look ever to the future is the earmark of an eternally youthful spirit. Senility and despondency are both unproductive. With the generation of youthful spirits rests the hope of better things.

Let me ask you, reader, what is your spiritual attitude? Are you spiritually senile? spiritually despondent? or are you spiritually youthful and hopeful? Upon what does your spirit fix her eyes? the dead past? the present only? or upon brighter, better things ahead?

If we are still young, the forces that build have so far outdone the assaults of waste and tear that we have nevertheless made a gain. If we are just in middle life, opposing forces are just about balanced. If we have started down the western side, this one more year enables us more fully to comprehend Paul's word, "Our outward man is decaying." It has also brought its peculiar trials and losses. We have been "troubled on every side, * * * perplexed, * * * persecuted, * * * cast down." And with all of this naturally comes a strong temptation to discouragement.

Our Lord Jesus taught, however, that the eternal is the intrinsic and the truly valuable. Temporal treasures may be locked up in houses, but thieves break through and steal. Or folded away in boxes, and the moths get in and devour. Or buried in the earth for safety, only to be discovered later, eaten away by the corroding rust. And if these have been our treasures, our only treasures, our loss is tremendous; for since "Where your treasure is, there also is your heart", the thief stole our heart, the moth devoured holes in it, the corrosion of the rust ate as deeply into it as it did into our buried hoard. But if, as Jesus advised, we have laid up our treasures above, when thief and moth and rust have done their worst our heart is still undisturbed; for heavenly treasures are far beyond their blighting touch. Glory to God!

Paul had the Jesus-view of things.

"Hasn't the year aged you, Paul?" "Yes", he replies, "the outward man is decaying, but (what of it?) the inner man is renewed day by day."

"But haven't you met with discouragement, my brother?" "No", he answers. "I have been troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. * * * For which cause I faint not."

"But, brother, how do you keep your heart up? You have met with real losses." And the old saint replies, "Well, yes! And again, no! I have lost some of the 'seen things', but they are temporal, transient; very much so, anyhow. Everybody loses things. And everybody is some day going to lose all his things. I just lost mine a trifle sooner than you did. That's all. My real valuables haven't been touched yet. They are the 'above things', the unseen but, nevertheless, 'the eternal things'."

Reader, a friend of mine wandered into a backwoods' schoolhouse in northeastern Oklahoma one Sunday morning. Everything was as quiet as a Sunday morning among the hills. On the board before my friend's eyes were lines:

"Did you ever think as the days go by,
That it won't be long till you and I
Will go riding by in a high-plumed hack?
And when we do, we'll never come back?"

"Did you ever think as you work for gold,
That a dead man's hand a dollar won't hold?
You may work, and manage, and pinch, and save,
But we'll all be broke when we come to the grave."

Who wrote the lines my friend never knew; but he, the happy possessor of the Jesus-view of things, seized a piece of chalk and wrote underneath those lines, "Happy is the man who has a bank account on the other side", leaving the writer of the other lines to wonder about the writer of the added line.

But back to Paul and our text.

"Friend Paul, how about the sore trials of the past year?" "Yes", he admits, "I had some. But my trials are light compared to what they are working. They are so short compared to the duration of what they are working. Light trials are working a weight of glory. Momentary afflictions are working an eternal weight of glory. And the longer they work the more glory they work. And this is the way things always work while I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." I admit I have suffered trials and losses in temporals, but I am daily gaining in eternals. Wherefore I faint not."

Said an unknown writer, "The eagle which soars in the air does not worry itself about how to cross rivers". Lord, give us the eagle spirit!

I have found a very plain admonition for you, reader. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead (to earthly things), and your life is hid with Christ in God."

"But, brother", says some one, "I have looked so steadily earthward and backward, and so long, that I'm clear discouraged. My heart is faint within me. What can I do?"

Listen to the Voice of God speaking to you "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Such waiting upon the Lord will turn your eyes away from the earthly things and the long-past things, will lift them above the present things, and will fix them upon the heavenly and eternal things. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—Free Methodist.

THE ARMOR PROVED, FAITH DEVELOPED

Our faith is the centre of the target at which God doth shoot when he tries us; and, if any other grace shall escape, certainly faith shall not.—Spurgeon.

Tests in every department and everywhere are

the dread of the spurious, while they glorify the genuine. Tests are the just due of righteousness. On these holy truth shall triumph.—B. P.

When I was at Shields, I went into a glass-house; and, standing very attractive, I saw several masses of burning glass, of various forms. The workman took a piece of glass, and put it into one furnace; then he put it into a second; and then into a third. I said to him, "Why do you put this through so many fires?" He answered, "Oh, sir! the first was not hot enough, nor the second; and therefore we put it into a third, and that will make it transparent.—Whitefield.

Trial brings man face to face with God,—God and the touch; and the flimsy veil of bright cloud that hung between him and the sky is blown away; he feels that he is standing outside the earth, with nothing between him and the Eternal Infinite. Oh! there is something in the sick-bed, and the aching heart, and the restlessness and the languor of shattered health, and the sorrow of affections withered, and the cold, lonely feeling of utter rawness of heart which is felt when God strikes home in earnest, that forces a man to feel what is real, and what is not.—F. W. Robertson.

The essential difference between great and common men is in the use of their opportunities. Genius and mediocrity are not so far apart as many have imagined. Success and failure are only separated by a step.

"Gentlemen", said Napoleon I. to his staff after five hours of hard fighting, "we have been defeated this morning." Then taking out his watch and looking at it a moment, he said, "It lacks ten minutes to twelve. We have just time for a splendid victory before night." At once he re-arranged his forces, and, forming a new line of battle, he snatched victory from the very jaws of disaster, and slept a conqueror on the hard-fought field.—Rev. J. W. Johnson.

A traveler once, standing in the shadow of a forest on the border of a lake, saw upon the opposite bank what seemed to be a deep blue mist rising far up the hill-side. He thought, How unwholesome must this ravine be with such an atmosphere constantly within it. He found his way over rocks and slippery places to the other side, and lo! as he drew near, no mist was there, and he discovered that what looked like deadly vapor was really a bed of sweet blue flowers stretching up the bank far as his eye could reach. So will it be with us. We see now the events of this distorted world "through a glass darkly". We seem surrounded by a deadly atmosphere, but as we come nearer in God's good time to the end, his providences in the earth, and in our own lives also, will blossom out in fragrant flowers of peace and righteousness and faith.—Mrs. J. H. Knowles.

OUR GOLDEN AGE

After studying the careers of history's 381 ablest men Professor Thorndyke of Columbia University calls the age of 47.5 the "masterpiece age". He says that "only four per cent of the world's greatest work has been accomplished before the age of 40."

The period of maximum creative achievement is after fifty, according to Professor Dorland in his books, "The Age of Mental Virility" and "The Triumph of Maturity."

Handel wrote "The Messiah" at 56. Wagner composed "Parsifal" at 69. Leonardo da Vinci did "The Mona Lisa" at 54. Titian did nothing before 40; between 70 and 90 he did his best canvases. Michelangelo did his best after 60.—Selected—Free Methodist.