

GOD IS NOT PLEASED WITH MERE PATRONAGE

W. Edmund Smith

God's condemnation of his ancient people was that they often drew near to him with their lips but their hearts were far from Him. Lip service may tell the Lord how great, and good, and holy He is, and go through religious devotions with pharisaic precision, to the tithing of mint and anise and cummin, and at the same time refuse Jesus a supreme place in the heart and life.

God cried out to his people of old, "Bring no more vain oblations; your new moons and your solmen assemblies are a weariness to me;" "rend your hearts and not your garments." They would go through a form of repentance and shed crocodile tears, but God could see through such sham performances. The psalmist realized this when he confessed: "Thou desirest not sacrifice else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offerings; the sacrifices of God are a humble and a contrite spirit; a broken and a contrite heart O God Thou wilt not despise."

God is not worshipped with men's hands or words that come from lip-service. He dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Many of the great magnificent cathedrals and elegant churches may be more displeasing to God than are the temples built to heathen gods. The heathen know no better. Paul cried to the Athenians: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." All the show and pomp of present-day popular Christianity must be an abomination in the eyes of God who desireth truth in the inner parts and in the hidden parts shall make me to know wisdom. Yes, and there may be a general confession of sins, which belong to the life of sinning and repenting every day. But such confessions do not lead to reformation of the life and the bringing forth the fruits of genuine repentance. There may be no more virtue in the Protestant's confession of sins than there is in the Catholic's confession of sins to the priest. They both mean to go on in the same old way, but their consciences are soothed with the thought they have given God some patronage and recognition.

So many have such a low idea of the requirements of God and are so obsessed with the sense of their own importance, that they think that God must feel highly honored when they condescend to go to church on Sunday morning, give something in the offering and serve the world, the flesh and the devil all the rest of the week. Oh, they may not be doing anything so terribly wicked. But the love of God does not dominate their lives. Theirs is all formal devotion. They draw near with their lips but their hearts are far from God. They worship and serve the creature more than the creator. They worship in heart at the altar of the world. They know nothing of a life devoted to God. They have the same kind of hearts the Pharisees had who nailed Jesus to the Cross.

We wonder if Jesus were to come to a great city and go into a great popular church, with its formal devotion, and were to stand up and preach like he preached on the mountain top, what kind of a reception would he get? Those who name the name of Christ but ridicule holiness and in their hearts despise those

who profess it, would nail Jesus to the Cross as did his enemies in days of old.

But the sad thing is, that those who once knew the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto them, may lose out that sense of spiritual reality and the consciousness of God's abiding presence and have now only a form of godliness. Where once there was fire and holy devotion there are now only ashes and the memory of better days. They may still be regular at Church but they have no real passion for souls or real love for the prayer meeting. They are luke warm and neither cold nor hot, a condition that brings God's most severe condemnation. 'I will spew thee out of my mouth.' Why? Because we may have lost all real heart devotion and be giving God only lip-service. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." He may be going to a holiness church, even preaching in a holiness pulpit, and apparently be very zealous in the service of the Lord. But he may be building of wood and stubble. You say that after you were converted you made a complete consecration to the Lord. But are you perpetuating that consecration, or have you taken something back? Some can say, "I am saved and sanctified," and still have so little of the warmth and glow and joy and praise that belong to real holiness. What is the good of people reckoning they have money in the bank when they have no bank account? What is the good of a person reckoning he is saved and sanctified when he has little or no joy, has lost that sweet communion with God he once had and his heart does not grip the promises of God. Lip-service: So much taken up with the affairs of life that they think little of God, nor do they love to be alone with Him. Here is a good test of our spirituality: How do we feel, and what do we think when we are alone? When we awake in the night is He still with us? Is there a welling up in our hearts of praise and thanksgiving to Jesus our Lord? Can we thank Him for all the losses and the crosses in life and really feel that God hath dealt bountifully with us? Can we cry from the heart "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee." If we can, then we may conclude that the Holy Ghost still abides; we may have confidence that our prayers are going through. What a blessed thing to draw, with joy, water from the wells of salvation!

TURNING DEFEAT INTO VICTORY!

Rev. E. E. Shelhamer

We are in a world of winning and losing. About half of the best people on earth are out of Divine order, more or less. And the sad thing is that they are held fast and cannot extricate themselves. During the first world war the Germans and French sea-sawed back and forth on "no man's-land" for six months. One day they took a trench, then lost it the next day. In like manner many Christians gain ground then lose it. They do not have constant victory, day after day. Surely there must be something better than this. We have heard them say, "I am a Christian, but a defeated Christian." Through Grace we can be, not only "Conquerors, but more than Conquerors." After we have conquered the world, the flesh and the devil, we can go farther and help others to do the same.

Take David for a study: He was fleeing from King Saul and got out of Divine order

when he hurriedly fled to Gath and joined himself to King Achish. Now old Achish was a shrewd Philistine and said to himself, "I will show special kindness to David and thus put him under special obligation and later he will be mine." So, he gave to David and his six hundred men Ziglag, a dirty, border city. David was there, out of Divine order for a year and four months. Think of it! A great Warrior, out of touch with God, and running for his life.

One step out of God's plan may require a thousand other steps to recover this one, if it ever is recovered. While on the devil's territory, (Ziglag), David went out and defeated the Amalakites and took much spoil. But upon returning he found his city in ashes and all their wives, children and cattle stolen. He and his men "wept until there was no more power to weep." Then in desperation, his valiant men mutinized and "spake of stoning him." He was surely in a bad way. He was "greatly distressed," and doubtless the thought of suicide faced him. What could he do, What did he do? No ordinary man could turn the tide and swing the situation back in his favor.

Here we find an all-round man, too big to be defeated. The same man who took a lion by the beard and reached down between his jaws and rescued a little lamb. Now he grapples with impossibilities and we read, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Everything and everybody was against him. He had only one source of encouragement, but that was enough. After prayer and consultation, he said to his tired, hungry and discouraged men, "If you will trust me once more, if you will rally around me, we will pursue and overtake these thieves," and they did and "Recovered All." It took a big man to do this. He lost everything, then regained everything. He was a bankrupt one day and a millionaire the next. He did not do little things. He did not give cheap presents. If you will read the context, the latter part of 1 Sam. 30, you will find that David sent "presents to the elders of at least 200 cities." Say, dear reader, why not, from this moment, "encourage yourself in the Lord," and undertake great things.

OBITUARY

Mr. Charles Grant, of Woodstock, N. B., passed peacefully away October 19th, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. George True, where he had lived for several years, and was kindly cared for during several months when he was confined to his bed. The funeral service was held on the following Monday at the Reformed Baptist Church at Southampton, where brother Grant had been a faithful member and near where he was born about 92 years ago. It was very largely attended by many old people by whom the deceased was well known and highly respected for his honorable, upright, Christian life. His wife having predeceased him about 30 years, he is survived by one brother, Gordon, and one son Clifford, both of Fredericton, and the daughter with whom he lived, Mrs. True, of Woodstock. Rev. H. S. Dow had charge of the funeral service assisted by Revs. H. C. Mullen, G. A. Rogers and H. L. Robertson. God's very beautiful promise, "With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation," was surely fulfilled in Brother Grant's case.