

The Centrality of Christ

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The Lord Jesus Christ, the Beloved Son of God, is either in the Margin of our lives or He is at the Center. This is the solemn issue of our Christian life which we must all face.

It is relatively unimportant where we live, what we do, what we possess, or who we are, but it matters very much what place Jesus has in our lives. For life, it seems to me, is rather like the circle of vision of our eyes; many things crowd into it, passing in and out of view. What is near the circumference is dim, what is at the center is clear. The shifting gaze fixes now on this object, now on that, but the eye that is steady is held by one object alone.

In Christian life, Christ should be the central object of love, ambition, interest and activity, the focal point of life, the Sovereign Lord around whom all else revolves and to whom all else ministers and gives place.

Edward Payson once wrote that "true religion consists in giving God the place in our views and feelings which He actually fills in the Universe. We know that there He is All in all!" In order to give God that place we must give Christ that place, for God has set His Son in the Center. Christ deserves this place by virtue of His Sacrifice for us, He demands it by virtue of His Lordship, He desires it for our very good. He must be pre-eminent, central in all things.

Now many of us make a tacit admission of this: "Of course Christ is central in my life," we say. "Many years ago I surrendered to Him. I am a consecrated Christian worker, I pray daily, I preach frequently." And so on. All that may be true—but is it true experimentally that Christ is Central? It is a matter of daily, hourly experience, intensely practical in its outworkings. We must check up with ourselves as to whether Christ is Central or not, as follows:

- (a) Is my life absolutely governed by the interests of the Lord, or do my own interests govern?
- (b) Is my personal walk with the Lord the most important issue of life?
- (c) Am I jealous for the glory of Christ in every situation, or am I concerned with my own reputation?
- (d) Do I repent of sin, as soon as I am made aware of it?
- (e) Am I sensitive whether or not something is taking the Lord's place in my heart?
- (f) Is my mind so strung to the Lord that it returns easily to Him when it is released from essential concentration upon something else?
- (g) Do I always see the Person and Glory of Christ in sacred things, e. g., in the Scriptures, in Hymns, in Sermons, in other Christians, in Church gatherings?
- (h) Am I absolutely satisfied with Christ, so that my heart is free from a selfish love of things which I possess, or from a lust for things I do not possess?

To live with Christ as the Center of heart and mind is to live in Revival. Revival is Christ coming into Centrality within us, controlling thought, word, and deed, imparting His own love, joy, peace, power, bringing into our hearts all that He is—wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and liberation. Revival is Christ gaining the Central place in one and then another, relegating into the margin all else, and Himself standing in the midst of His

WE'LL DRIVE TO HELL

Tom Hardy was the worst character in the village, a hard drinker, an agnostic and blasphemer. He was a delivery man and when under the influence of liquor would make the dust fly. But he loved his horse more than any human being, and the horse seemed to understand her master.

One night Tom was coming out of the village public house, drunk as usual. Some Salvationists were on the street corner. Flicking his whip and giving his horse a smart cut, he shouted, "Come on Bess, we'll drive to hell tonight."

Bess pricked up her ears at the unexpected onslaught and away she went. He had not gone far before the Salvationists heard a crash, and rushing in the direction found he had overturned in an abandoned clay pit. Both horse and driver were dead, with broken necks, when they reached the place. Tom Hardy had indeed driven to hell that night.

Harry Turner was also a hard drinker and blasphemer, and was regularly found in the "White Horse" on Saturday night. Some young people were in the habit of handing around tracts and magazines. This Saturday night Harry Turner held up his glass as a young lady approached him with a tract, and said, "Where is hell, can you tell me that?"

"At the end of a Christless life," immediately replied the young lady. The man was so impressed with her answer that he sought and found salvation and received God's gift of eternal life.

A little verse of a hymn says:

Two gates, two roads, two paths for all,
And all therein must go.

Dear reader, which road are you traveling? The one that leads to the end of a Christless life or the way that Calvary made for us?

"There is a path that leads to God, all others lead astray."

Narrow but pleasant is the road, and Christians love the way.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Tomorrow may be too late.—Gospel Tidings.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

The presence of God has no relation to this place or that. Whatever duty or devotion calls, we shall find God at hand. If we are right with Him, we may be just as conscious and just as sure of His presence in the little cottage kitchen as in a great assembly of the saints.

His presence is to be realized as truly at the bottom of a coalpit as in a sunny forest glade.

We may look for Him with the same confidence in the factory, working with thousands of others, who know nothing of His love.

The place is nothing to Him; the person He comes to meet and live with is everything.

—Bramwell Booth.

people to give the bread of life to them, that they may impart to the multitudes.

To live with Christ in the Center is to live in the will of God, in the true life of revival. To allow Him to be crowded into the margin is to live in stagnation and defeat.

Is Christ in the Margin of life, or is He at the very Center?—Living Waters.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

PENNIES THAT WERE DIFFERENT

At an English missionary meeting an earnest speaker had been telling about the trials and triumphs of God's work in foreign missions.

A collection was then taken, and as it was a children's meeting the plates came back with a great many pennies. These looked very much alike, but the steward who counted them over said they differed greatly.

"How so?" asked the speaker.

"Because of the different feelings with which they were put into the plate," answered the steward.

Then he gave a little history of what had happened as he passed the plate among the classes of children.

One boy thought collections should not be taken at a missionary meeting. "When I give," said he, "I want to give without being asked. But as the plate is here, right under my nose, I suppose I must give something. Pity, though, I can't come to a meeting without being dunned for money." With this the boy threw in the penny. "I call that an iron penny," said the steward. "It came from a hard, iron heart, and the hand that gave it was a cold and merciless hand."

As the plate passed on, it reached another boy. He was laughing and talking with a boy in the chair behind him. The plate waited a second, while the boy's teacher tapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Is your penny ready?"

"A penny," said the boy, turning about, "what's a penny? A penny's nothing; here goes a penny for the heathen!" And so saying, he tossed in his penny, and at once looked about for some more fun.

"That boy's penny," said the steward, "I call tin."

The plate went on its way and presently met a boy of another sort. His penny was ready. He had been holding it between thumb and finger in such a way that his classmates might all see it. Looking around to make sure that they were all now watching him, he dropped it in with a self-satisfied air and with a loud thump.

"A brass penny, that," said the steward.

"But the next kind that I got was a great deal better," he went on. "It came from a little fellow who had been listening to every word of the speaker, and whose heart was touched with real pity."

As the plate drew near this boy, he turned to his teacher and whispered, while a tear dimmed either eye, "I'm very sorry for poor sinners in the far countries. Of course I'll give a penny and I only wish that I had more to give."

"I call that a silver penny," said the steward.

"But now I have the best of all," and he held up a clean and bright new copper coin.

"This I shall call a golden penny, for as I held out the plate to get it, I heard the boy that gave it say, 'I love my Saviour. He wants the poor heathen to know how much He loves them, and to learn His pleasant ways. I will give my penny gladly for His sake; and I would give anything I have to carry out His wish if I knew He wanted it.'"—The Missionary Speaker.

"If He is all to me, He will be in all that concerns me."