

"PITY THYSELF LORD"

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These are the words of Peter spoken to Jesus, recorded in Matt. 16:22, according to a marginal reading, which also has the sanction of Adam Clark.

With this rendering we can see more clearly why Jesus rebuked Peter and seemed severe with him, saying, "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men". Also, when we consider carefully the word "savourest" we find that it carries the idea of tasting and smelling, hence we would not be far off if we took Jesus' words to mean: "Peter, what you have just said tastes and smells like Satan!"

Temptation to self pity and to save himself was no new suggestion. No doubt Jesus had met it more than once before, so He at once recognized the Satanic source of what Peter may have innocently said, hence the rebuke to Peter. If Christians lived near enough to the Lord, their sensibilities should be acute enough to sense the source of temptations to self pity, before Satan could get very far with them.

We have hardly taken care to study the shrewd tactics of Satan in his approach, even to fully sanctified people. The Scripture tells us that he comes as an "Angel of Light," as well as a "Roaring Lion". If one method fails, he tries the other. Some types of temperament are more susceptible to one than the other.

This "Pity Thyself" is a subtle temptation, and almost every kind of temptation can be related to it in some way. Satan was saying to Jesus: "You should not be so humiliated as to go to the cross to suffer and to be spit upon and abused. Save thyself, pity thyself, be it far from Thee!" Who has not met a similar subtle temptation? Satan would suggest it in relation to our service in the Lord's vineyard. How often we have heard the statement, "I was too weary to attend church on Sunday," but the same person would be right in his job on Monday with no thought of being tired.

Self pity will keep souls from seeking God for fear of ridicule or being turned down by some friend. Someone says a cutting word, or insults us, or turns his back upon us. Now, these things in themselves can do us no hurt, nor cause physical pain, and as one good brother once said, when folk laughed at him, all that it amounted to was that "they wrinkled up their faces and straightened them out again." The hurt comes only when we pity ourselves and say "You poor dear thing, you should not have to suffer such things, and you should defend yourself."

Take the matter of pride. It goes back to the same source. If I am not dressed as expensively as others, or if my clothes are not in latest style, someone may criticise, and point me out as old-fashioned,—so, how can I stand it? Satan will be right there to say, "Pity thyself." If styles decree skirts so short and necks so low as to be no longer modest, or if custom demand such long heeled shoes that it is next to impossible to walk in them, yet, these things must be done to please the world and save self. If custom decrees that eyebrows must be plucked and lips painted, no matter how horrid it makes one look it just must be done out of self pity lest we should suffer criticism, for being out of style. Men are bound by habits which they love, so when faced with the thought of having to give them up to find the Lord, at once they begin to pity themselves and say, "Surely, I shall not have to make such a sacrifice."

And, so we could proceed at length.

A subtle self pity at times will follow people to an altar of prayer, and even some friend or dear one, may offer pity for the conviction and distress of a seeker, and

turn him aside from dying out and saying "Yes" to God. I have seen this happen a good many times. While a person was weeping over sins and carnality, some overly sympathetic friend comes along and strokes his hair, and with pity tells him he is a very good person already, and there is no need of praying and weeping so. The seeker enjoy the encouragement to self pity, so gets up and goes away without dying out to self, and letting God have His way. Self pity allowed Satan to gain a victory.

Mother Eve was herself caught largely from self pity, so this element was in the original temptation. Satan made her believe that God was withholding from her something she should have, so she pitied herself and took the forbidden fruit, and brought sorrow to herself and the world.

I wonder if there is any temptation that is not tintured with this same element? Let us analyse our hearts and minds under every temptation and see.

THE SABBATH — KEEP IT HOLY

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more important is man's spiritual need of the Sabbath. A day set apart to worship God, and think wholly on spiritual values. To honor God, and assemble together with God's people for Christian service and fellowship. This is essential to spiritual survival.

This nation has traveled fast and far and furious from that time of remembering the Sabbath to keep it holy, and has made it a day of Sunday bridge, golf-tournaments, highway madness, picnics, family reunions, ball games, swimming, fishing, and a thousand other ways of Sabbath desecration! Before taking the last leap into total Sabbathlessness, we may recall that France made the experiment, and by government order, for 14 months, no observance of the Sabbath by any one was permitted. The results were that lawlessness and licentiousness swept the land like a murky sea, and in that brief period, there were 20,000 more divorces than in the previous five years. For her own self-preservation France was compelled to restore the Sabbath. No wonder Emerson said, "Sunday is the core of our civilization!"

If this Sunday, morning and night, all church members who are physically able, were to crowd the churches of America, many sanctuaries would be overflowing and the man of the street would rush to see the strange sight. Then the preacher would have a new glow in his face, a new light in his eyes, a new speech on his tongue, a new message from his soul, and multitudes would be crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" America would be reborn.

This nation's desecration of the Sabbath is being reflected today in all sorts of crime, delinquency, and infidelity. A recent report from Long Beach, California, said that a divorce marathon was being conducted there in Superior Court. The Judge started hearing divorce trials on Monday and his goal is to complete 120 cases by Friday night. He is attempting to hear 24 cases a day, allowing about 13 minutes for each case. The assembly-line method is being used for divorce cases which are not contested and thus can be handled speedily.

May God save America from the awful plight and doom which is bound to follow as surely as she continues with her high-handed Sabbath-breaking is my prayer. Sunday has been turned into Fun-day, Run-day, and consequently, Sin-day. Christians, let's fast and pray and plead with God to come to our rescue once more, and send a mighty, Holy Ghost revival to this nation, for it is our only hope of escape from the wrath of God which is certain to follow unless we repent!