

Contemporary Christianity is Sick

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pietism. The evangelical world is cursed with the form of pietism which claims the leadership of the Spirit and the blessing of God in all sorts of dubious ways. We have a pietism which, while professing to accept the authority of the Word of God, actually cancels that authority in its own interest. This is leading to loose doctrine, loose living, and loose associations.

This pietism, which resists objective truth, precise definitions, and absolute principles, is both unscriptural and nonintellectual. A pietism which will not submit to objective truth, which resists logical thinking, which subordinates principle to utilitarianism, must be rejected by those who submit to the authority of the Word of God. Any form of pietism which will not submit to the Word of God is an enemy of the Christian faith, however plausible it may seem and however pious the language used. This pietism divorced from the objective standard of the Word of God lacks spiritual discernment, for truth and error must be identified by the Word of God, not by the subjective states or feelings of the individual.

PRAYER WITHOUT INTEGRITY

Prayer without integrity has become a commonplace. The doctrine of prayer in the Bible is inseparable from the integrity of the supplicant. The Bible is insistent that sin separates men from God, that sin in the life may mean that God refuses to hear, that some moral and spiritual states definitely hinder prayer.

The idea seems to prevail that God, like a congressman, can be moved by mass pressure to do what He otherwise would not do. This is not only contrary to the Word of God, but it raises perplexing questions about the nature and character of God. It is true that intercessory prayer is taught in the Scriptures; it is not true that God responds to mass pressure.

Prayer today has been taken out of its scriptural setting. It has become an instrument of promotion. It is being used to give sanctity to that which God has not sanctified. The current doctrine of prayer lacks integrity. Men, regardless of character or theological belief, are being asked to use their "influence" with God. Everywhere in the current revival of "religion" prayers are being offered regardless of the teachings of the Word of God.

WORSHIP WITHOUT SINCERITY

The current vogue is vague worship. All over the land, people are "worshipping" God, regardless of their belief, character, or sincerity. This enables religion to prosper, but it does not create Christian discipleship.

The Scriptures condemn insincere worship in unsparing language. Hear Isaiah, as he speaks to the people of his day and every day: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:11, 13, 15).

Worship without sincerity is mocking God, and God hates it. The religious world is sick. In spite of its numerical prosperity, in spite of its thousands of decisions, in spite of the heavy sale of Bibles, in spite of the millions of dollars raised for religious purposes, it is spiritually and morally sick!

The King's Highway

What is a Revival?

by J. L. Brasher, D.D.

A revival is not merely a church-joining campaign, though people who are converted should unite with the church. We need better members rather than more members.

It is not a mere human affair, though God works with and through human means. He will always use human means if they are properly related to him and his Word. He has plainly laid down in his Word the conditions on fulfillment of which he will bless.

It is not simply building any one denomination so that all the benefit shall remain within four walls. He can bless neither selfishness nor sectarianism. Denominational loyalty is good, but sectarianism is denominationalism gone to seed. It was the glory of early Methodism that her converts overflowed all her boundaries, refreshing and building other communions. Oh, that it may do so again! Indeed, I have heard many in holiness churches testify, "I was converted (or I was sanctified) in such and such a Methodist church." At present the number who have been so blessed is considerable. The holiness churches owe Methodism a great debt, for they found their doctrines ready prepared by Methodist theology.

It is not simply getting sinners converted. Indeed, getting sinners converted; is not a revival it is a moral resurrection from the dead. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." That is the address to sinners. There must be some life in an object or it cannot be revived. David prayed for a clean heart and a constant spirit, and added, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." He did not presume to do personal evangelism until he himself was in full touch and favor with God.

It is not a resurrection. The holy prophet, voicing the word from God to Israel, said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel...they shall revive as the corn." In all my experience in different states I have never seen a farmer plowing dead cornstalks and expecting them to revive. However, I have often seen revivals in a cornfield. I have seen a field of corn thirsty for a revival. The leaves were twisted, and the corn was threatened with "round stalk." It was sighing in the dry breeze. Someone says, "We need a big rain, a regular downpour." No, not so fast, my inexperienced friend. It will turn a bit cooler, and then will come a refreshing dew and each shouldered chalice on the stalk will be full of crystal dew. The leaves will be untwisted and the whole stalk will be flexible. When the sun peeps over the hills, a cloud will shroud his face and says, "No, you are not to shine on this bedewed corn." All day the cloud thickens, and a gentle breeze comes from the southwest.

About four o'clock in the afternoon it begins to sprinkle rain. The farmer comes in from the field and sits on the front porch and listens to the patter of the raindrops. It showers on until about chore time, and slacks a while. Then it begins a little heavier. It sound so good that the farmer says, "I am going to bed and get a good night's sleep." It showers gently all night, and slacks long enough for him to do the chores. Then showers fall, the lifts, and showers come again. It showers all night again, and stops at sunrise. All morning the clouds obscure the sun, then about noon they begin to break away and, like great white ships, captained by the wind, they hurry away over the azure sky-sea and hide themselves behind the hills. The farmer puts on his gum boots and goes down into the field. The corn is laughing and clapping its long fingers

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