

Oct 15, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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## The Heavenly Vision *Helen H. Lemmel*

1 O soul are you wearied and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see.  
There's light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free.

2 Thro' death into life everlasting.  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
Over us sin no more hath dominion -  
For more than conquerors we are!

3 His word shall not fail you He promised,  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell.

### *Chorus:*

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face.  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.

•t&dw

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## Thought of the Week.

“...The Bible, and its objective truths, must *always* be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ to the heart, and to discern His guiding voice. When the objective truths become a focused entity unto themselves, to be admired, proclaimed, and defended, the lifeblood of *Jesus living presence* begins to be choked out by the idolatry of worshipping truths above the Truth.

***A God entranced view of all things (Edwards), demands a Christ entranced view of all truth.***

•ejr3

### *Feature Article:*

## **Experimental Christianity. Part 2**

In our last article I looked at the necessity of a genuine faith resting in union with Christ precipitating experiential and emotional realities. There will be more than a stoic acknowledgement of the truth. Emotions and feelings are *never* the root of truth, but they *are* a fruit of the Spirit and truth. They will vary from person to person, and ebb and flow through the Christian life. The objective truths of the faith remain constant, and carry us through times of darkness and insensitivity by the Spirit-wrought grace of God. But overall, there is an experiential reality to a true walk with Christ that must not be denied.

I would now like to focus on the experiential aspects of *effectual calling*; that is, in salvation, what cognizant, experiential realities are essential and what is variable or secondary.

In the traditional (especially Reformed) view of the Gospel, “*Law-work*” is absolutely essential in the process of salvation. Until a sinner is brought to a deeply felt conviction of sin and his just condemnation to hell under the *righteous judgments of the law*, he is not deemed prepared to come to Christ. While I do not question that countless Christians have come to faith under such preaching, I do challenge the necessity and centrality of preaching the Law in proclaiming the Gospel. As we look at the *actual New Testament examples* of the presentation of the Gospel, we may be surprised to find some of our basic presuppositions challenged.

I cannot find one example in the actual Gospel preaching of the Apostles, and other evangelists, where an “adequate” exposition of the broken Law, and the just reality of an eternal hell is given, much less *pressed* upon the sinner.

In Acts chapter 2, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter goes to great length to proclaim ***who Christ is***, and that He has risen from the dead, and that He is the bestower of the Holy Spirit (in fulfillment of the promised *New Covenant*). The people *are* deeply pricked in their hearts, not because of Peter's law-preaching, but because the Holy Spirit has revealed to them, *through* the preaching of Peter, that Jesus is both Lord and Christ (vs36) -the Messiah - whom they have just nailed to a tree! They were cut to their heart, repented, believed, and followed.

In Acts chapter 7, Stephen traces Israel's history in

demonstrating that, though God had extended to them grace after grace, they repeatedly rejected **Him**; they killed the prophets who foretold of Christ; and now they have resisted the Holy Spirit and murdered Christ himself (v 52). The Law *is* mentioned at the end: their repeated trampling of *God's covenant with them* was *symptomatic* of their rejection of God. They, like Peter's hearers, were also cut to the heart; but instead of the Spirit granting them repentance, they confirmed the very point of Stephen's message by murdering him. Significantly, Stephen departs proclaiming his vision of Christ's glory.

As we consider Christ's witness to Nicodemus (John 3), and to the woman at the well (John 4), and any other passage in which the *content* of the actual Gospel preaching is revealed, we do find common elements - but we do **not** find a consistent witness of broken law and condemnation to hell, nor a pressuring of sinners to believe these things. That these things *are* taught in the New Testament should be undeniable; but that they are absolute essentials in the proclamation of the Gospel, of which sinners must become *experimentally aware*, cannot be supported in the scriptural record, except by theological presupposition.

What we *do* find consistent in the Biblical example is the proclamation of *Christ himself*: that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah; that He literally *rose from the grave* conquering death; that *He is Lord* - the judge of all men, to whom they shall give account, and that He is the *bestower of the Holy Spirit* (as the mediator of the New Covenant). In salvation, *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (the person) of Jesus Christ* (2 Cor 4:6). **If** the Holy Spirit has wrought *that* reality in the heart, then, in *seeing Jesus*, the sinner will recognize his sin (John 3:18; 15:21), and he will realize that the *great sin*, of which all others are but symptoms, is in not existing and living for the glory and love of God, in union with Christ. If loving God with all our life and being is the mother of all commandments (Matt 22:37), then not loving and living for Him is the mother of all sins. In *that* light, true repentance will come as a turning from idols and self-willed living to live for, love, and serve the living God.

I am not at all suggesting that, in evangelism, we must avoid talking about hell or the eternal wrath of God. The Spirit will use any and all truths of scripture to shine the light of Christ into the heart. But the priority focus and intent of the Gospel must be to

proclaim the living realities of the Person of Christ himself. The objective of the Gospel is not to bring sinners to a faith in hell, or in the great promises of heaven, or in the hope of personal blessing. If the fear of hell or the desire for personal blessing is the primary impetus for confessing Christ, then *the glory of God in the face of Jesus* has not yet been realized.

To summarize, then, our particular emotions and feelings in coming to Christ can greatly vary from individual to individual. But as Christ is proclaimed through the word of the Gospel, there must be a cognizant reality of the Spirit of God shining the light of Christ into the heart. From that dawning of faith in Christ there must flow a cognizant desire to turn from a self-willed life to follow Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God. This is true repentance and faith. ●ejr3

### ***Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.*** **Priorities in the Priority of Love.**

*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. Matt 10:37.*

Love is the hallmark of true Christianity. *By this shall all men know that we are His disciples* (John 13:35). Without love we are nothing, regardless of our religious zeal (1Cor 13). *Faith works by love* (Gal 5:6). But within the priority of love, there are also priorities regarding the objects of our love. If we love even family members above Christ, then we have corrupted love. If we love this present world, with its obsession for pleasure, pride, and possessions, we act like enemies of God (James 4:4; 1Jn 2:15). And, of course, self-love provides a perennial source of snares and pitfalls for the Christian.

The truth is, if we maintain the priority of loving God supremely in all of life (Matt 22:37), then all these other things will take their proper place. But allow the slightest shift in *that* priority, and all else will begin to unravel for the Christian.

We were created *by* God to exist *for* God. He has purchased us with His own blood to restore us to original purpose. So... How's your love life? ●ejr3

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