

Galatians - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 18 (6:7-9)

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” —Galatians 6:7-9.

THEY who, in youth, sow wild oats will have a terrible crop to reap in older days (Prov. 22:8). No wonder the world has so many disillusioned and disappointed old men and aged women. They frittered away the golden hours of youth in careless living and selfish indulgence, and as a result their wrecked constitutions, and in some cases impaired minds, make their later years most distressing and unhappy. It is quite otherwise with men and women who, in the days of their youth, lived in an orderly manner, walking before God in self-control, refusing to become the slaves of sensuality and voluptuousness. For them, the hoary head is indeed a crown of glory, because found in the way of righteousness (Prov. 16:31). Someone has well said, “The Devil has no happy old men.” But how different it is with those who have known and loved the Lord through the long years! When they reach the eventide of life, theirs is a peace and a serenity which is found only in the service of God. Of them it can be said, “At eventide it shall be light.”

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 17 (5:16-17)

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” — Galatians 5:16,17.

THE inward conflict between flesh and spirit disturbs and bewilders many believers, often leading to the anguished query, like that of Rebecca of old, “If it be so, why am I thus?” (Gen. 25:22). The struggle seems to cast doubt on the reality of conversion. It is rather an evidence of it, for the two natures are in every child of God, and this produces condition unknown in days before the new birth took place. The way of victory is not to fight the flesh and, endeavor by our own power to suppress its activities. It is to yield to the control of the Spirit of God and as we walk in the Spirit whose delight it is to occupy our hearts with, and conform us to Christ, we find practical deliverance from the power of fleshly lusts. In place of “cannot” in the last clause we should read “may not.” It is only as we are spirit-led we are enabled to do the things that we would, and should.

—Doddridge.

Daily Sacrifice, September 14 (5:24-26)

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another”—Gal. 5:24-26.

WHEN the will is yielded to God, so that we no longer seek to obey the desires of the flesh, but find our joy in doing His will, as revealed in the Word, life takes on a wholly different character to what we ever experienced before. The surrendered believer leaves the Holy Spirit free to do that work which is His constant delight, so occupying one with Christ Himself, “who is our life” (Col. 3:4), that the life also of Jesus becomes manifested “in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:11). This is life at its best, whether one designates it as the victorious life, the overcoming life, the higher life, or by any other term. It is the life of Christ working in those who are yielded in Him, thus lifting the believer above earthly principles, worldly ways, and carnal activities. But we need to remember: we are not to be occupied with ourselves and our experiences if we are to know the blessedness of this, but with Christ Himself, and so we shall become increasingly like Him (2 Cor. 3:18).

—Heinrich Held, Trans.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 16 (4:4-6)

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” — Galatians 4:4-6.

SONSHIP is more than new birth. Through that we become children of God. This was true of believers in all dispensations. But now by the reception of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption, we become sons. This is the distinctive blessing of the present dispensation of grace. Old Testament saints were as children in their nonage. New Testament Christians are sons who have attained their majority and are joint heirs with Christ. We are all children of God by the second birth and sons of God by adoption. This is what is unfolded here in Galatians,

as also in Romans 8:14-17. In Roman law all born in the family were children, but only those legally adopted were reckoned as sons.

Daily Sacrifice, September 13 (4:26)

“Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” — Galatians 4:26.

THE heavenly Jerusalem is our mother—that is, our mother city. We are the children of grace and we belong by new creation to heaven. Our citizenship is there (Phil. 3:20; note, for conversation read citizenship, the true rendering), and we are called to behave ourselves now as those who belong to that new and glorious scene. When we walk as men of this world, and forget our new citizenship, we dishonor the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

—Charles Wesley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 15 (3:13-14)

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” — Galatians 3:13,14.

TO redeem is to buy back. Because of his sins the Jew was sold under the curse of the law. The same applies in principle to Gentiles, who now have the knowledge of the law, which the Galatians to whom Paul wrote had not, in their unconverted days. But Christ died not only to free believing Jews from the curse, but that the blessing of Abraham, that is, of justification by faith, might come to the Gentiles also. All who believe are delivered from the law’s condemnation, Christ having taken our place in judgment and borne what our sins deserved, in His own body on the tree. He became a curse for us. He was made sin for us. In the fullest possible sense He answered for us before God. Now we go free.

Daily Sacrifice, September 12 (3:23)

“Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed” — Galatians 3:23.

THE law was designed to convict men of their sinfulness and inability to save themselves. The more honest a man is and the more tender his conscience, the more readily will he acknowledge that he has broken that law times without number and is helpless to keep it, apart from divine aid. To those so convicted God presents Christ as the Holy One who met every claim of the law perfectly, and then went to the cross and suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All who believe in Him have eternal life here and now and are forever delivered from condemnation.

—Jas. Stennett.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 14 (2:20)

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God” —Galatians 2:20.

CRUCIFIXION with Christ is judicial. When He died God saw the end of man in the flesh. All believers therefore can look back to the cross and say in faith, “it was there I died, in the Person of my Substitute.” Therefore I am no longer viewed as in Adam. I am now in Christ. In the power of this truth I am called to walk. I live in Him. He lives in me. My life here in the body is to be the manifestation of Christ in me. This is true experimentally as I reckon myself dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. It is not that I am to try to die to the old order. I have died, and I take that place in relation to everything that is of the flesh, mortifying the deeds of the body. Practically, I die daily, as earth-claims are refused. Thus I live unto God.

—H. A. I.

Daily Sacrifice, September 11 (2:21)

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” —Galatians 2:21.

THE letter to the Galatians is the most vehement of all Paul’s epistles, written out of the fervency of his heart as he realized that many whom he had led to Christ were being ensnared in a system, which, while it professed to be the strength of holiness, was actually “the strength of

sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). In this letter he shows that believers are justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the law, and that to go back to law after one had been brought to know Christ, is to fall from grace (Gal. 5:3, 4). It is to drop down from the high standard of salvation by grace alone to the confused conception of preservation and final security by the works of the law. This Paul could not tolerate, and we may well thank God today for his strong stand against it.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 13 (1:3-5)

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" —Galatians 1:3-5.

CHRIST did not die merely to save us from eternal doom, blessed as that aspect of salvation is; but "He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver (or save) us from this present age of evil," as the expression "this present evil world," really means. The age is evil because Christ has been rejected and men are living in independence of God. From this the believer is delivered as he recognizes his identification with Christ in His death. Because of the fact that He died in our place, as our representative, we too have died. We have died to the law, died to sin, died to self, and died to the world that has no place for Christ.

Margaret Mauro.

Daily Sacrifice, September 10 (1:15)

"It pleased God, who... called me by His grace" —Gal. 1:15.

THE sovereignty of God in salvation comes out vividly in the conversion of Saul. It is certain that he was not seeking after Christ, but Christ was seeking him, and after an undefined period, in which the persecutor's conscience had been exercised by the "goads," the Lord suddenly manifested Himself, though not in such a way as to compel Saul to become a Christian against his will. But He brought such pressure to bear upon that will that there was an immediate surrender, and Saul took the place of a repentant, submissive believer, seeking for further light upon the path he was to tread. He might have done despite to the Spirit of grace as others did (Heb. 10:29), and resisted the Holy Ghost, as did the opponents of Stephen (Acts 7:51), but instead he bowed in brokenness of spirit before Jesus and confessed Him as Lord.

—G. W. Frazer.

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