

Beyond Seduction - A Return To Biblical Christianity

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Preface: Back to the source

In regards to the criticism of Seduction of Christianity, as causing division; Hunt quotes Loyd-Jones, "We must all regard schism as a grievous sin, but having said that, one must also point out that there is obviously great confusion, and much disagreement, as to what constitutes unity, as to what is the nature of unity, and as to how unity is to be obtained and preserved.

The "New Age" shamanism that secular society has embraced is also powerfully seducing the church. The merger of pseudo-christianity with shamanism is essential to the formation of Antichrist's coming world religion. This is only possible when, as is the growing tendency today, sound biblical doctrine is set aside in favor of whatever works, and experience and new revelation take the place of the Bible.

Ch. 1 A Return to Biblical Christianity

J.M.Boyce - "If Madison Ave. executives were trying to attract people to the Christian life, they would stress its positive and fulfilling aspects.. Unfortunately, we who live in the west are so conditioned to this very thinking (and precisely to this type of christian evangelism or salesmanship) that we are almost shocked when we learn that the first great christian principle is negative. ... It is not, "Come to Christ, and all your trouble will melt away". It is as Jesus declared, "If any man would come after me. Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Facing the evidence

Prof. Thomas Arnold (Oxford) re. Jesus as the Christ & His death and resurrection; "For many years I have studied the histories of other times, and examined and weighed the evidence of those who written of them, and I know of no other fact in the history of mankind that is proved by better and full evidence of every sort, to the fair enquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us than that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

What the bible proves to the head is not readily accepted in the heart, largely because of the "negative". Prof. Simon Greenleaf (Harvard) - "The religion of Jesus christ aims at nothing less than the utter overthrow of all other systems of religion of the world; denouncing them as inadequate to the wants [needs] of man, false in their foundations and dangerous in their tendency ... These are no ordinary claims; and it seems hardly possible for a rational being to .. treat them with mere indifference or contempt."

Confronting self-deception

Never have so many given so much honor to a book they apparently have so little genuine intention of heeding Charles Colson - While millions pray for revival, we need to ask whether we are asking god to save our society, ourselves, or our souls ... The real trouble is that we are not willing to accept the gospel for what it is. Jesus doesn't tell us how to save anything except our souls.

The universal blindness of mankind is self delusion .. the power of the human mind to deceive itself seems infinite. In a study of over 200 criminals, doctors discovered there was not a single criminal who believed he was evil. Each thought of himself as basically a good person, even when planing a crime.

One of the bible's major purposes is to correct man's high view of himself, yet many now interpret it as just the opposite. Today man's besetting sin is thinking to highly of himself, yet is convince that his problem is low self esteem.

Interpreting the bible

The bible declares we are rebels who blinded by pride and sin, deceived by our own selfish lusts and ambitions, and condition by years of living in a world that has exalted man and forgotten God. It's not easy then, to throw off our old ways of thinking and begin to see through new eyes from God's perspective. The bible doesn't cater to our self-deception; it seeks to correct it. We must not assume that we will be able to really understand any scripture unless we are will to be changed by it.

Biblical christianity

To attempt to force sinners under the threat of hell to act like saints, when they have neither the heart nor the power, only produces hypocrites. C.H. Spurgeon - "Jesus did not die for our righteousness, but for our sins. He did not come to save us because we were worth saving, but because we were worthless, ruined and undone. He did not come out of any reason that was in us, but solely for reasons from the depth of His divine love. "The purpose of the bible is not to glorify man, but God; not to delude us re. our self importance, but to tell us of the humbling yet burden lifting truth.

A.W. Tozer - "True faith requires that we believe everything god has said of himself and what he has said of us. Until we believe we are as bad as God says we are, we can never believe that he will do for us what he said he will. Right here is where popular religion breaks down."

The Cross and Self

C.S.Lewis, re. freedom from self by the cross; ".. the feeling of infinite relief of having for once got rid of all the sill nonsense about your own dignity which makes you restless and unhappy all your life."

Tozer, "The cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the NT. It's a new bright ornament on the bosom of a self-assured and carnal christianity. The old cross slew men; the new one entertains. The old cross condemned men, the new amuses. the old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh, the new encourages it .. The flesh, smiling and confident, preaches and sings about the cross; before that cross it bows and toward that cross it points with carefully staged histrionics, but upon that cross it will not die, and the reproach of the cross it stubbornly refuses to bear."

The fear of death keeps in bondage; it's the fear of losing the things that life involves, the ambitions and pleasures that revolve around self, the fear of losing acceptance and approval of our peers, of losing a promotion or missing some pleasure or ambition.

The Real Barrier

The big problem is not intellectual but moral.

We must never confuse our desire for people to accept the gospel with creating a gospel that is acceptable to people.

C.S. Lewis > Our business is put what is timeless in the particular language of our age. The bad preacher does exactly the opposite: he takes the ideas of our own age and tricks them out in the traditional language of Christianity.

Whatever happened to the fear of God?

.. the church indulges our desire to "feel good" instead of responding to our need to be spiritually challenged and fed through solid exposition of the scriptures.

.. The electronic church in particular panders to our appetite for entertainment rather than authentic discipleship and maturity.

Ch.2 The Church's Most Desperate Need

A growing popular delusion

.. popular & seductive fad dressed in christian terminology .. accepted as bible truth is the belief that positive is necessarily good and negative is conversely bad.

Ch.3 Contending For The Faith

The basic issue

Tozer > If we only believe hard enough we'll make it somehow. So goes the popular chant. What you believe is not important. Only believe. Back of this is the nebulous idea that faith is an almighty power flowing through the universe which anyone may plug into at will. What is overlooked in all this is that faith is good only when it engages truth .. the secular counterfeit of faith is called .."positive mental attitude"

Positive Confession

basic beliefs:

1. faith is a force that both man and God can use: it's the substance out of which God creates .. we have the same ability as God has dwelling or residing in you .. we have the capabilities of God, we have his faith
2. faith's force is released by speaking words: words are the most powerful thing in the universe .. they produce after their own kind .. God had faith in his words .. he had faith in his faith ..creative power was in God's mouth, it's in your mouth also.
3. Man is a "little god" in God's class: we were created to be god's over the earth, with a little "g" .. man was created in the class of God .. we are a class of God's , to rule as gods by speaking words ..

4. anyone can use the faith force: pagan or christian .. what you say will come to pass
5. you get what you confess: this is the vital key, speaking aloud, thereby releasing the faith force .. the key to getting the desires of your heart is to make your words agree with what you want.
6. Never make a negative confession: the spoken word releases power for good and evil, therefore never speak anything negative, only positive Distorted views

Lloyd-Jones > that man whose doctrine is shaky will be shaky in his whole life. One almost invariably finds that if a man is wrong on the great central truths of the faith, he is wrong at every other point.

Getting faith in your faith

A.W. Tozer > Faith in faith is faith astray. to hope for heaven by means of such faith is to drive in the dark across a deep chasm on a bridge that does not quite reach the other side.

Ch. 5 Unbelief Has Many Faces

Faith and daily life

Spurgeon > faith is the root of obedience, and this may be clearly seen in the affairs of life .. faith trust and carefully follows the instructions. Faith which refuses to obey the commands of the Saviour is a mere pretense and will never save the soul.

Stafford > My third objection is that all these spiritual emphasis tend to turn their reference point from God to man, they ask, " How can I shape myself, my mind, my faith, and my activities to meet God?" God becomes a force to be tapped into, an image to manipulate in your mind, a particular kind of feeling that grips the heart. Attention is turned toward ourselves, toward what is happening with us, is subtly but surely different from turning toward God himself. And by placing the focus there, we bypass the more fundamental question, "How will God come to me?"

Faith and God's love

William Law > If you will stop to ask yourself why your brand of christianity is hardly recognizable as related to that which primitive christians knew, your own heart will tell you that it is primarily because you never thoroughly intended to live as they lived and to die as they died...

The limitations of science:

C.S.Lewis (The Abolition of Man) > For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to {God's} reality .. for magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men ... I am not supposing these manipulators to be bad men. They are, rather, not men in the old sense at all. They are, if you like, who have sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what "Humanity" shall henceforth mean. Good and Bad applied to them are words without content .. Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man ..

Beyond Science:

movie .. UN Pavilion, Expo 86 .. Appealing for peace in a troubled world .. "Why must there be good and bad, right and wrong, us and them?" ... appeal for international cooperation, For The Common Good ... those who insist upon absolutely no absolutes can not live by the standard of no standards ... psychology's "scientific" standards of "normal" behavior are arbitrary, changeable, meaningless, and inevitably amoral.

Tozer > the modern vogue of bringing science to the support of Christianity proves not the truth of the christian faith but the gnawing uncertainty in the hearts of those who must look to science to give respectability to their faith...

The Fruit of the Spirit:

true faith opens the door to the other wise unseen and unknown world of God's kingdom and to rule in our hearts and over our lives. Faith sees God for who he really is, bows to his majesty, surrenders to his purpose, and turns us into the instruments of his holy will..

Biblical perspective:

submission to God is a moral issue, not an intellectual one. .. the devils believe and tremble but they still persist in their rebellion..

Oswald Chambers (Jer. 45:5) there is nothing easier than getting into a right relationship with God except when it;s not God whom you want but only what he gives ..

Ch.6 To Glorious To Be Easy

A Growing Seduction:

Tozer > it's in this matter of how to deal with man's proud and sinful nature that we discover two positions within the framework of christianity.

One position is that which leans heavily on the practice of psychology and psychiatry. There are so-called christian leader who insist that Jesus came into the world to bring about an adjustment of our ego .. So, there are thousands of referrals as the clergymen shift our problems from the church to the psychiatric couch. On the other hand, thank God, the bible plainly says that Jesus came to bring an end to self - not to educate it or tolerate it or polished. In true repentance and in self repudiation, we may turn our backs on the old self life .. We have the right and the power .. to cross over to a spiritual victory and blessing .. walking joyfully under the banner of the cross of Jesus Christ from that hour on.

many seek psychological help because it seems to offer an escape from the pain that often accompanies spiritual growth ... the value system of the bible involves self sacrifice, pain and relinquishment.

Too glorious to be easy:

..the christian is a man who can be certain about the ultimate even when he is most uncertain about the immediate.

many who call themselves christians have not found the release from all anxiety

that comes from surrendering all to Christ; they're still bound in themselves.. one will always be fearful of losing what has not been surrendered completely to Christ

Wm. Law > to think you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd as to think you created yourself. .. whenever man allows himself to have anxieties or fears or complaints, he must consider his behavior as either a denial of the wisdom of God or as a confession that he is out of His will ..

Bernie Zilbergeld (The Shrinking of America: Myths of Psychological Change) ..a survey of seven medical specialties by Medical Economics found that psychiatrist came out on top in more categories of marital problems, including sexual problems, than practitioners of any other specialty. .. Any one who keeps company with counselors knows that, no matter what they may be like with their clients, in their personal lives they are no freer than others from pettiness, depression, poor communication, power struggles, anxiety, bad habits, and other difficulties. Nor are the organizations, departments, or clinics that they run...

Don't water down christianity:

C.S. Lewis > do not attempt to water down christianity. There must be no pretence that you can have it with the supernatural left out. So far as I can see christianity is precisely the one religion from which the miraculous cannot be separated.

Richard S. Taylor > Sometimes instead of a gushy affirmation people need to be helped to face up to reality. At times true love will give not saccharin but shock treatment. At times, instead of trying to talk people out of their self depreciation we should agree with them; then try to get them to confess their worthlessness to God, and turn from their sin which is at the root of such feelings.

The New Professionals:

Zilbergeld > one of the most consistent and important effects of counseling is a desire for more counseling ... there is absolutely no evidence that professional therapists have any special knowledge of how to change behavior, or that they obtain better results - with any type of client or problem..

too oft christianity is presented as merely a superior way to achieve the same ambitions as the world pursues..

Ch. 7 Is All Truth God's Truth

A seductive challenge:

there is no such thing as a mental illness; it is either a physical problem in the brain (such as a chemical imbalance or nutritional deficiency) or it is a moral / spiritual problem

violating a basic principle:

christian psychology is one of the most alarming example of a wrong approach to scripture: it's based on predetermined psychological theories that are imposed upon the bible..

What is christian psychology?:

..we are often asked if we are "Christian Psychologist" and find it difficult to

answer since we don't know what the question implies. We are christian who are psychologist but at the present time there is no acceptable christian psychology that is markedly different from non-christian psychology. It is difficult to imply that we function in a manner that is fundamentally distinct from our non christian colleagues. Is there a distinct christian dentistry, surgery, history, or grammar? .. as yet there is not an acceptable theory, mode of research or treatment methodology that is distinctly christian..

A basic fallacy:

psychology attempts to explain and thereby understand, assuming that ignorance is the problem of behavior .. but all the understanding in the world will not provide the power to change ones behavior; A new moral choice is demanded.

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