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"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

THE FEAST OF THE LORD

John 2:9-10, "When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

We have been to the devil's house and have seen four tables at which his guests were seated. We saw that in feasting his guests, he gave the good wine first and after that which is worse. We are going to see that the principle is reversed at the table of our Lord, and when we come into the land Beulah, and enter the city of the great King, we shall exclaim, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

It is common in scripture for our experiences, our joys and sorrows, our good, and our afflictions, to be spoken of under the figure of

a cup. Matthew 20:22, "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able." Matthew 26:39, "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." See also John 18:11, Psalm 116:13, and Psalm 23:5.

It is good for us to remember that all our experiences are the Father's cup and we ought to drink His cup without murmuring. He puts in the cup what is best, not what tastes best. Our doctor gives us some bitter medicine, but we take his word for what is best; and shall we not take our Father's word for what is the best experience for us.

Now let us take a trip through the banqueting hall of our Heavenly Father and look at some of the tables, the guests, and their experiences:

I. The table of outward providences. At this table we see the poor and afflicted and despised. The first cup is the cup of bitterness--the worst wine first. Christ will have no disciples dazzled with first appearances. He begins roughly with them. The first course of the Redeemer is affliction, sorrow, poverty and want.

In the olden time, when the best of God's people were at the table, he served them worst, for they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, and they kept on drinking of these bitter cups for many a day, but afterwards he brought out sweeter cups for them. After the cup of affliction comes, the cup of consolation and finally the cup of everlasting bliss. The poor saint comes to die. He will never again drink of the cup of poverty--he will be rich forever more. The sick saint comes to die. Never again will he be troubled with disease. The persecuted saint comes to the

river of death, and on the other shore is the land of glory and a throne.

In outward circumstances, the best things come last. Two martyrs once burned; one of them lame, the other blind, and when tied to the stake, the lame man threw his crutch down and said to the other, "Cheer up, brother, this is the sharp physic that shall heal us; I shall not be lame after another hour, nor shalt thou be blind."

As to outward circumstances, the child of God is like the Crusaders. The Crusaders started off on their journey and had to fight their way through miles of enemies, and much through leagues of danger. When the armies of the Duke of Bouillon came in sight of Jerusalem, they sprang from their horses, clapped their hands, and cried, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem." They forgot all their toils, and all their wounds, for there was Jerusalem in sight.

II. The cup of inward experience. This is such a bitter cup at first—it is the cup of conviction. It is the first cup for every saint. When Paul drank of it, it made him blind for three days. But this cup is followed by the cup of loving forgiveness. What relief came to our convicted soul when we learned that Christ died for our sins—even for us; that he was punished for us, that the guilt of our sins were upon him, and he bare them in his own body on the tree. This cup is made up of faith and hope and love. Faith in the Redeemer's blood as all-sufficient to make us accepted with God; hope for a better world than this one which lieth in the

wicked one; love for the Saviour that makes us glad when the Lord's day comes—a day of feeding on His word in the company of kindred spirits. But there is still another and better cup, the happiest experience of all, when we shall awake in His likeness and be like Him. A saint was once dying, and another said to him, "Farewell, brother, I shall never see you again in the land of the living." "Oh," said the dying man, "I shall see you in the land of the living that is up yonder, where I am going; this is the land of the dying."

WHY DOES GOD SAVE THE BEST WINE UNTIL LAST?

He gives us the worst wine first to give us an appetite for the best. At the old feasts of the Romans, men used to drink bitter things, and all sorts of obnoxious mixtures to make them thirsty. Now, in this world, God is giving His children bitter mixtures to make them thirsty, that they may take deeper draughts of heaven.

Heaven would not be so sweet to us if we had not first dwelt on earth. Heaven will mean more to us than to the angels who always behold the face of God. Who enjoys best the sweet rest of the night? Is it not the laborer who comes home tired and exhausted? Who understands best the joy of peace? Is it not the man who has dwelt in the land of war? Or rather the boy who has gone over the top in the face of canister and shell and poison gas? Who knoweth best the sweetness of joy? Is it not the man who has passed through a world of sorrow? To whom will Heaven be the real "Home Sweet Home?" Will it not be the man or woman whose home has been broken up by sin or

death? To whom will heaven be the real land of rest? Is it not the man who labors under the load and burden of sin.

We ought to be satisfied with our Father's arrangement and plans for us. He saves the good wine—the happiest experiences for the last. If you have to drink a bitter cup, be comforted in the thought that there will be a sweeter cup to come.

By: C. D. Cole

WE GET LETTERS. . .

Dear Pastor Gormley:

Greetings in the name of our God the Father and Savior Jesus Christ.

Praise and thank God million times for your blessing. I received your package contents with 22 books, that really bringeth joy and glad to me, that I can't express with my mouth. Really that help me strengthen my christian life.

Pastor Gormley, I received such a blessing from reading it. Thank you very much indeed. I am thoroughly enjoying the magnificent study on the doctrine of God. Praise and thank God for His doctrine of grace, "Election." "Him that cometh unto me I will no wise cast out" in John 6:34, but in the first sentence Jesus said "all that the Father hath given unto me shall come unto me....etc." Praise and thank God x 1,000,000 for His merciful a sinners like me. Christ wouldn't cast out any who came because any who came would be those whom the Father had given. All your books that I received are best tools to my christian life.

I deeply appreciate you Pastor Gormley and all the staff of the Bryan Station publication. Rest assured your name is always mentioned in my prayers.

May the Almighty God continue to enrich you with blessing.

E.L.S.
Philippines

THE FOLLY OF THE SINNER RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

C. D. COLE

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

From a child I have heard of sinners resisting the Holy Spirit. I have heard other ministers warn sinners, and I myself have warned them against resisting the Holy Spirit. I have heard strange stories of the conduct of sinners in resisting the Spirit. In several states I have heard the same story of a man who, in resisting the Spirit, jumped out of a window of the church house to get away from the striving of the Spirit. I have listened to evangelists urge sinners to yield to the Holy Spirit, warning them that they might drive Him away never to return again. I have heard of men (though I have never met one) who asserted that they, having refused to yield to the Holy Spirit, were deserted by the Spirit and never again felt His strivings. Now the writer does not deny that there is an element of truth in the above expressions, but he believes that there is also a vagueness in them which is confusing and misleading.

What is the sin of resisting the Holy Spirit? Just what does the sinner do in resisting the Spirit? What does the Spirit do in striving with the sinner? It is the purpose of this article to clear up some things which appear to be vague and obscure in the minds of many people.

The only N.T. passage that relates directly to our subject is Acts 7:51 and context. An exegesis of this text in the light of its context will answer three questions, namely--Does the sinner resist the Holy Spirit? How does the sinner resist the Holy Spirit? Why does the sinner resist the Holy Spirit?

Does the Sinner Resist the Holy Spirit?

The passage under consideration gives clear answer that sinners do resist the Holy Spirit. This was the charge brought against the Jews by Stephen. In resisting the Spirit they were following in the steps of their fathers. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

There is an idea prevalent that a few times in the lifetime of a man the Holy Spirit comes to him in an effort to save (regenerate) him; that he may resist and overcome the effort of the Spirit; and that after repeated and unsuccessful efforts, the Spirit leaves never to make another effort to save that man. This is called sinning away the day of grace and many evangelists get visible results by warning men that they better come forward in profession of faith lest they drive the Spirit away and forever seal their doom. Such an invitation is confusing, misleading, and dangerous. It is not a Scriptural invitation. Under such an invitation the unenlightened sinner naturally thinks that in coming forward he is yielding to the Holy Spirit. Many a man has doubtlessly thought he had yielded to the Spirit when he came forward and gave the minister his hand, when in fact his eyes had never been opened to the Gospel way of salvation. Salvation is an experience in the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit enabling the sinner to understand Gospel

truth. Let the reader ponder prayerfully John 3:3; 2 Cor. 4:3,6.

Stephen said, "Ye do ALWAYS resist the Holy Ghost." It is not something that the sinner does occasionally but is that which he does repeatedly and continually.

How Does the Sinner Resist the Holy Spirit?

Resisting the Holy Spirit is rejecting the Word of God of which the Holy Spirit is the author. The sinner is resisting the Spirit when he hears the Gospel and rejects it and opposes the one who bears the message to him. The Jews to whom Stephen preached resisted the Holy Spirit in the

same way their fathers did. "As your fathers did, so do ye," were his words to them. Their fathers resisted the Holy Spirit by rejecting the preaching of the prophets and by persecuting them. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?"

Light is thrown upon the subject by reference to Neh. 9:29,30. Nehemiah is explaining the cause of Israel's punishment and captivity by saying that Israel hardened their necks and refused to hear (Neh. 9:16). They rebelled against God's prophets (Neh. 9:26). And in all this they were resisting the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit was speaking through the prophets just as He was speaking through Stephen. "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear" (Neh. 9:30).

REJECTING THE WORD OF GOD IS RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT; PERSECUTING THE PREACHERS OF THE WORD IS RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT. Andrew Fuller calls this the indirect influence of the Holy Spirit. The following quotation from him (Fuller's Works, page 742) is in full harmony with what we have said above--

"I conceive there is what may be termed an indirect influence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, having inspired the prophets and apostles, testified in and by them, and often without effect. . . . The message of the prophets being dictated by the Holy Spirit, resistance of them was resistance of Him. It was in this way, I conceive, that the Spirit of God strove with the antediluvians, and that unbelievers are said always to have resisted the Holy Spirit."

Fuller then speaks of the direct influence of the Holy Spirit which is effectual in renewing and sanctifying the sinner. This is a good distinction to make. The sinner resists the indirect influence of the Spirit in presenting the truth to him through the preacher; but the direct influence of the Spirit is the direct impact of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit, and this is not resisted, because it is the power of the Almighty.

There was much and bitter controversy in the days of Stephen. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able

to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:9,10). And because they could not meet his arguments, they killed him. In rejecting his message and stoning him to death they were resisting the Holy Spirit.

Why Does the Sinner Resist the Holy Spirit?

The passage before us gives clear and unmistakable answer to this question. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." The sinner resists the Holy Spirit (His indirect influence) because his heart is wrong and his ears are not attuned to the Word of God. He neither understands nor loves the Word of God. God's words are full of wisdom but to the natural man they are foolishness.

A dear brother once remarked that I did not believe the sinner could resist the Holy Spirit. I replied that I believed that the sinner did nothing but resist the Holy Spirit until his resistance was overcome by the Holy Spirit. The preached Word is the objective ministry and the indirect influence of the Holy Spirit, and this the dead sinner rejects and resists because it is foolishness to him. Our Lord told Nicodemus that except a man be born from above he cannot see or understand the Kingdom of God. The indirect influence of the Spirit in the Word is resisted until overcome by the direct influence of the Spirit in quickening power.

The Gospel must not only be presented to the sinner, but a divine work must be wrought in the sinner if he is to be saved. Objective truth, however plainly presented, is not sufficient for salvation. The sinner must be given eyes to see and a heart to understand it. Putting a larger lamp in the light socket will not enable a blind man to see; he must be given the ability to see. *In the new birth the Holy Spirit gives eyes to see and a heart to understand and love the Gospel.* This is His direct and subjective ministry and is not resisted. The child does not resist its birth.

Thus we see that it takes more than the indirect influence of the Spirit in human conversion. Paul describes his conversion as the effect of being apprehended (laid hold of) by Christ (Phil. 3:12), and of having Christ revealed in him (Gal. 1:16). The objective ministry of the Spirit is resisted, but not the subjective. *When this distinction is made the truth of man's impotence and the Spirit's omnipotence is conserved, otherwise we have the creature mightier than the Creator.*

