

False Religion and Its Doom.

by Horatius Bonar

Horatius Bonar's sermon warns against the dangers and ultimate doom of false religion, emphasizing the necessity of true worship of God.

Scripture: 2 Kings 23:16, Psalm 51:6, Isaiah 29:13, Ezekiel 6:5, Matthew 15:8-9, John 4:24, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, Galatians 1:6-9, James 1:26, Revelation 21:8

Topics: "True Worship", "False Religion"

Description

Horatius Bonar warns against the dangers of false religion, emphasizing that God demands truth and sincerity in worship. He explains that false religion, regardless of its zeal, is ultimately useless and abhorred by God, leading to condemnation and destruction. Bonar highlights that true worship must come from the heart and align with God's revelation, as anything less is unacceptable. He stresses the inevitable doom of false worshipers, who will face shame and contempt, as their hollow practices will not withstand divine judgment. The sermon calls for a genuine relationship with God, free from the trappings of falsehood and externalism.

Transcript

"I will scatter your bones round about your altars." - Ezekiel 6:5

"I will lay your corpses in front of your idols and scatter your bones around your altars." Ezekiel 6:5

It is of Israel's idolatries that the prophet is speaking; her false gods, her idol-altars, her lying prophets and priests. Jehovah abhorred them, for he is a jealous God, and with him there is but one religion, one creed, one Bible, one God. Men may speak of their right to believe as they please, and worship as they think fit. But God claims the right of deciding for us in these things. We are not under man's rule in these things, but we are under God's. He will not tolerate falsehood, or error, or unbelief, or superstition, or anything inconsistent with His revelation. Every false religion He will destroy, every false religionist He will condemn. The true and the false religion are in His eyes as far asunder as east and west, as unlike as night and day. There can be no compromise, no fellowship of light with darkness, of Christ with Belial, of the believer with the infidel. God is not a man that he should lie, or that he should overlook the lies of others. If he is the true God, let us follow him, let us worship him in spirit and in truth.

Man says that he needs sincerity and earnestness; but what God asks is truth, THE truth, the one truth, the one religion which he has revealed. Mark these four things,

- (1.) false religion;
- (2.) its uselessness;
- (3.) its hatefulness;
- (4.) its doom.

I. FALSE RELIGION. There is such a thing as false religion. It may be earnest and zealous, yet false. No amount of sincerity or zeal will make that true which is in itself false. False religion is the worship of a false god, or the false worship of the true God. In general both are mixed, though in different proportions. To worship Baal or Molech would be to worship a false god. But have we not, unconsciously, perhaps, many Baals and Molechs, which we worship under the name of Jehovah, as the statue of Jupiter at Rome is adored as that of Peter. We worship a false god when we do not worship the very God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we worship the true God untruly when we give him only half a heart, half a soul, when we go to Him with the doubt, and the gloom, and the unbelief that belong to Baal. Go to Baal with your uncertain and doubtful worship, go not to the living God, and do not think that the utterance of some true words or the expression of a little sentimental devotion is the true worship of the true God.

II. ITS USELESSNESS. It profits nothing and nobody, either here or hereafter. It is not acceptable to God. It will not be counted a substitute for the true. It does not satisfy the conscience. It does not make the man happy. It does not fill the heart. It does not heal diseases nor remove burdens. It does not give a man a good hope toward God, or brighten his prospects for eternity. It is irksome and unprofitable, only cheating the poor worshiper into the belief that he has felt or performed something good and worthy. It will not stand the fire. It is but wood, and hay, and stubble. The judgment will sweep it all away. It is useless both for time nor eternity, both for earth nor heaven. It is so unreal.

III. ITS HATEFULNESS. God abhors it. It has not one feature that is pleasing to Him. It is external, it is untrue, it is against His revelation, it is dishonoring, it is self-exalting. Therefore God abhors it. He needs the heart, it has not that. He needs love, trust, peace, joy, child-like confidence, reverence; it has none of these. It is deficient in every essential element that God expects in worship. Against false worship His prophets were commanded to speak. It was as smoke in His nostrils- abominable in His eyes. It is hateful in itself, it makes the worshiper hateful, it is pure mockery. It is rottenness and death; a skeleton, not a thing of flesh and blood, a mouthful of words, a handful of dust and ashes. Surely it is hateful to Him who is true, who desires truth in the inward parts.

IV. ITS DOOM. The worship shall be destroyed and the worshiper covered with shame and everlasting contempt. The scattering of the bones of the worshipers round the altars (2 Kings 23:16), like that of mingling their blood with their sacrifices, was the indication of utter contempt as well as condemnation. It was vengeance extending even to the dust!

- (1.) Certain condemnation, for God is to do it, and he will not lie.
- (2.) Utter condemnation, for here is God's hand interposing to judge completely.
- (3.) Visible condemnation. Before men's eyes, in a visible and striking form, so that there may be no mistake, not in a corner but in open day before all.

(4.) Expressive condemnation, such as will mark the sin; not at random, nor general, each man's sin shall bear its own peculiar brand of punishment.

(5.) Contemptuous condemnation, mingling the worshiper and his worship in one common ruin. Both shall perish- perish together, perish in the same doom; God shall laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear comes.

(6.) Everlasting condemnation. Their altars shall never rise again. They and their false religion shall perish forever. No falsehoods in hell. No hollow religion amid the everlasting burnings. See that your religion is true- your worship real. Beware of hollowness, falsehood, externalism- of everything that will not stand the fan of the great Husbandman when He comes in his glory for sifting and for judgment.

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