

The Subtlety With Which Such Are Feeling for Her Vitals

by Milton Haney

The sermon emphasizes the subtlety of the carnal mind and its devastating effects on the church, highlighting the importance of the holiness movement and the need for believers to resist the carnal nature.

Scripture: Romans 8:7, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 4:3, 1 John 4:1

Topics: "Carnal Mind", "Spiritual Deception"

Description

Milton Haney delivers a sermon on the subtlety of the carnal mind, highlighting its enmity towards God and holiness, and its ability to deceive even the most religious individuals. He emphasizes the danger of unsaved church members and ministers being under carnal control, leading to hypocrisy, insincerity, and a reckless breach of vows. Haney warns against the subtle agencies at work within the church to undermine fundamental doctrines, holiness teachings, and the authority of the Scriptures, ultimately aiming to eliminate the supernatural and lead souls away from God.

Transcript

There is nothing in the universe so subtle as the carnal mind, for it is the direct outflow of Satanic subtlety. No quality of this depraved essence within equals its subtlety unless it be its enmity toward God and holiness. The power given to diffuse itself, into every part of the life, as an attempting agency to its possessor, though otherwise a good man, is amazing. The most religious utterances of a brother in whose being it dwells may be so mixed with dissimulation, without his knowing it. Its presence in innocent childhood is often a fearful characteristic, and infallibly, in one form or other, it threads the life of God's real children, till they are wholly sanctified.

If this be true of our fallen humanity where grace reigns, how much more where grace is absent and the carnal nature has control of the soul? The truth of the above statements may be clearly seen in the following illustrations: 1. Think of a million unsaved church members taking the vows of Christian baptism, at the altars of God's church. The candidates in groups are standing before God and His people, when the following questions are asked and answers given: "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?"

Answer: "I renounce them all." Question: "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" Answer: "I will endeavor so to do, God being my helper." We would gladly account for these answers without the charge of intentional insincerity, and hope that most, if not all, were given without absolute hypocrisy. Yet mere resolves with unsaved men, if not persistently followed by acts of yielding to God, and much prayer for help, ordinarily will be as a rope of sand. The vows of baptism, however, are much more serious than mere resolutions; but unsaved men are every one of them under carnal control, and the rule of Satan. Such control cannot but stupefy the conscience and greatly bewilder mentality as to the things of God. Yet the reckless breach of these vows and utter failure, in at least nine cases out of ten, to keep them, is appalling.

2. This truth is further illustrated from the vows taken by ministers of the Methodist Church. There is no ground for questioning the integrity of thousands of them, who have been true to God and man in this great evangelistic field of Methodism, and such we are far from criticizing. We have been referring to unsaved church members, and now refer to unsaved ministers. The contrast between a self-appointed or church-appointed minister, who has not been born of God, and a minister born of the Holy Spirit, and called of God to this holy office, is as darkness is to light.

A backslidden minister, who has lost his sonship, may now be much more dangerous to the cause of God than though he had never had the life of God within him. We cannot think of the work and plans and plotting, to avoid holy vows, to pervert the central doctrines of the Gospel, to undermine the truth, to break the authority of the Bible, and drive the church into the devil's corral, as coming from regenerated men, or ministers; this would be impossible. But the time has come when those who have the life of God within, both in pulpit and pew, cannot be silent without bloodguiltiness, or passive spectators without complicity in the ruin of the church. She has been made a great power in the salvation of millions, and is yet the greatest evangelistic power in Christendom; and her spiritual downfall would be an incalculable damage to the cause of God.

There is no deliverance from the obligation of her saved ministers and people to rise up and confront her foes within her fold who are feeling for her life, seeking stealthily to eliminate her central doctrines, to quench her furnace fires, and transmute the "old thundering legion" into a Unitarian Brotherhood! These agencies have been at work for more than forty years to undermine the spirituality of the church, and were set in motion by their author, to counteract and destroy the holiness movement. There is a mighty unseen agency who never fails to be alert when Christ is being exalted. Back of the National Association [for the Promotion of Holiness], when Doctor and Mrs. Palmer and Caughey were waking the church of the Wesleys, on both sides of the sea, to the subject of holiness, special antagonisms were aroused which have never slumbered till this day.

Where holiness advanced, these agencies were increasingly active, and worldly appliances multiplied. In its strongest centers Methodist preachers got together and counseled to put it down, and wrote books directly in opposition to the established teaching of the church on the subject. As holiness books increased, more of these were written and published by our own book concern, with approval from high Methodist authorities.

The doctrine of holiness was the key to the arch, and as it began to crumble, by being ignored, slighted, opposed, other basal doctrines began to be ignored, in order to abandonment, and preparatory to a new system of doctrine, relating to depravity, sin, repentance, the new birth, the miraculous birth of Christ, His sacrificial death, His character as a Saviour, His two distinct natures, etc., etc., with more to follow!

All this has been carried forward without the counsel or consent of a million truly converted laymen, or the cooperation of ten thousands of her more spiritual ministers.

All this, we may add, is the result of crowding our church records with names which have never been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and sending shrewd, educated worldlings into the ministry, who have never been born of God; or through ministers, who have had eternal life and lost it, by rejecting God's call to holiness! See 1 Thess. 4:7, 8, and Heb. 6:1, 8.

Such characters have always been office seekers in the church, and in proportion as her spiritual power weakens, they get the ascendancy, and in proportion as they rule spirituality disappears. It has never been otherwise, in any generation; that in proportion as the internal glory of our Divine religion recedes, comes the cry for worldly appliances to fill the vacuum; and the spiritual tone of the church can be correctly judged of, by the width and strength of that cry!

Think of the Church of Pentecost, with her "tongue of fire, and heart of flame," panting for worldly amusements! Who now represents her? Popes, Cardinals and Bishops declare without blushing, that the church of Rome is her only true representative! What is there left in the Roman Church which reminds you of the church of Christ in the first century of her glorious life? Yet in these centuries of spiritual decline, of corruption in doctrine and practice; of worldly pomp, endless ceremonies, and idolatrous worship; her ecclesiastics teach and believe, she is the only true HOLY Catholic Church; and have never conceded it to be otherwise! She is the greatest ecclesiastical body on the earth; greater than all of Christian Protestantism put together; and if a truly spiritual body, as the church of Peter and John, and the church of John Wesley, could save the world in a single year!

But Christian Protestantism is sending her missionaries into every land, to bring Roman Catholics to Christ, and get them saved. Today there are few peoples in the whole earth who are more needy of real salvation than her millions in the Philippines and Central and South America; as her Sunday bullfights and manifold corruptions testify.

What is plainer in her case, than the substitution of church ritual for the gospel, church order for the Scriptures, self-crucifixions for the atonement, church loyalty for loyalty to God, the spectacular for Pentecostal glory, and worldly amusements for the joy of salvation? Spiritual decline leading to apostasy, has always been characterized by substituting outward pomp for the inner glory, and the spectacular for the meekness and simplicity of Jesus.

The wide determination in the high places of Methodism, to rid the church utterly of the Wesleyan teaching on holiness, could hardly be more manifest. The opposition to it, as we have seen, crystallized with the beginning of the great holiness movement, when leading ministers of the church, met [the] startling conviction of their need of it. As impenitent men are quiet and inoffensive, when conviction of their need of pardon is absent, but their opposition is fearfully aroused when conviction comes; so the tiger was aroused in these brethren when through the direct preaching on the need of holiness as a second experience, brought out their true condition.

Preaching, preceding this period, on holiness, with the fewest exceptions, had consisted in generalities, and holiness, whatever it might be, was a privilege, but largely [the preaching was on] repentance, and the new birth, with great directness, as the demand of the gospel, hence sinners were brought under fearful conviction, and were led to Christ for pardoned sin.

The holiness movement brought out holiness as a definite experience, not only provided and promised to all the sons and daughters of God, but absolutely required of every child in the family, and a condition of eternal life. Its heralds declared that God's law and character demanded it, that His gospel and Holy Spirit demanded it, and that much more was written in the Scriptures, concerning it than there was on repentance and pardon, and proved it, by the Word of God! This brought conviction, real Divine conviction, and more sinners were thus deeply awakened, brought to thorough repentance, and soundly converted to God, in this country during those years, than in the four great churches of Protestantism!

But this was not all, nor the chief part of it. Tens of thousands of God's real children were so convicted of their heart depravity and need of being wholly sanctified, they could not retain their justification without yielding to these convictions, and seeking a holy heart. These, each of them who met the conditions, without one exception, were sanctified, just as God had previously justified them, when they met the conditions of justification! Why not, who can tell? God has promised the one and has promised the other, with equal clearness. If His promise to justify penitent and believing sinners is infallible, why should His promise to sanctify His consecrated and believing child, be a failure?

But while tens of thousands of God's children were convicted of their depravity and God's will to sanctify them, yielded to these convictions and were sanctified, more than a thousand thousand, were in like manner convicted, who did not yield to their convictions; and that explains the present condition of the church! When God offers wealth to a poor man, and he rejects it, it compels him to do two things: 1. To get rid of his convictions, and 2. To persistently seek for substitutes for the riches he has forfeited. God only knows what it has cost a million souls to throw off their convictions for holiness, and the subterfuges resorted to, to enable them to cling to inward sin; or the wailings which it must produce at the judgment seat of Christ!

One result of this process is the reduction of its once beautifully saved subject, in his feelings, sympathies and soul trends, to the level of a worldling with greater thirst for sin and worldly appliances. It is this class of souls, who have largely officered the army of unconverted church members and ministers and are leading in the crusade against the Scriptures, and the fundamental doctrines of Methodism, as has been so clearly proven by Doctor William Henry Burns, of Chicago, who is an able minister and member of the Rock River Conference, that it cannot be truthfully denied.

A close following of their effort to mutilate God's Holy Book brings out the subtle design to eliminate the supernatural from both testaments, which would destroy its Divine authority, and furnish a jubilee for guilty consciences. One of this class, said to me defiantly the other day: "I have found that old book to be a fable, and I Am A Free Man!" Free from what? To take in all of sin's pleasures without fear of being punished! A brother of his, in St. Louis, said: "We will not only have to destroy the Book, but we will have to go farther, and dethrone the prime Monarch of the skies before we can have perfect freedom!" -- freedom from the demands of infinite righteousness -- freedom from the necessity of being holy -- freedom from Divine conviction, haunting the soul who refused to obey it -- freedom to take in sin, to give loose reign to fallen and depraved passions -- freedom to teach like Mrs. Eddy, that there is no such thing as sin, though theft and robbery, lying and blasphemy, murder and adultery, are daily occurrences in every nation under heaven! Such processes, ever so subtle, and apparently innocent in their beginnings, by their great author, are intended ultimately to take down God's partition between virtue and vice, and let in the flood-tide of damnation on the human race!

The same subtle, far-reaching design which is in the effort to mutilate the Scriptures, is strikingly apparent, in the stealthy agencies at work to undermine the fundamental doctrines of the church. The doctrines of the Bible as systematized by Wesley and his helpers, largely modified the teachings of the Protestant world in a single century. No system of doctrine ever equaled it, in its simplicity, in its complete harmony with the Scriptures, and with itself. Other systems of theology contained much of truth and fundamental teachings which never can be overthrown, but with these were interwoven principles and teaching which never could be harmonized. The fundamental doctrines of Methodism were so absolutely coined from the word of God, that they must stand or fall with the sacred oracles. Hence to do away with their authority, these self-appointed critics had first to discount the authority of God's Holy Book, by practically denying its Divine authority, ignoring all that is supernatural and rejecting the truth in the Book, from which these doctrines were coined! This, after all, is the old battle between sin and holiness, light and darkness, truth and error, infidelity and Jesus Christ!

Brother, with which of these two parties are you going to line up? With which would you like to be numbered in the Judgment Day?

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