

And One of the Elders Answered, Saying Unto Me, Who Are These Which Are Arrayed in White Robes?

by Phoebe Palmer

Phoebe Palmer emphasizes the importance of spiritual diligence, prayer, and living a life of holiness in preparation for eternity.

Scripture: Proverbs 10:4

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Living"

Description

Phoebe Palmer emphasizes the importance of enduring great tribulations and maintaining devotion to navigate through the challenges of the world, drawing parallels to the martyrs' faith. She highlights the diligence required to pursue holiness and spiritual growth, prioritizing the science of holy living above earthly knowledge. Palmer encourages believers to rise early to seek God, study the Scriptures, and present themselves as living sacrifices, ready for God's use in any area of life. She stresses the significance of representing Christ faithfully on earth to combat infidelity and fulfill the responsibilities as His followers.

Transcript

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." St. John.

From this time she became assured, that no less devotion of spirit is required to carry the follower of Jesus unpolluted through this present evil world, than that which bore the martyrs through the flames. And she wondered not that it should be said in reply to the inquiries relative to the blood-washed company before the throne, "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

She then thought of the observation of the wise man, "The diligent hand maketh rich." Also of the student who trims the midnight lamp, in order to be learned in mere earthly science; and resolved that every consideration should be subservient to this one prominent motive of ambition, viz., to be well skilled in the science of holy living: judging that if the child of mortality would thus rise early and sit up late, and eat the

bread of carefulness, as is not infrequently the case, in order to accumulate earthly knowledge, and often with no higher aim than earthly distinction, much more should the child of immortality, who has commenced an ever-enduring existence, by careful diligence, and patient, prayerful investigation, study to show himself approved in the sight of God and man, by having the deathless spirit well skilled in the science of immortality. From that time the intimations of the Spirit encouragingly assured her that this spiritual culture would not only tell on the pages of time, but would also speak on the records of eternity. And the infinite propriety of preparing the soul for an entrance into the abode of immortality became most apparent. And the literature of the Bible she believed to be the literature of heaven.

It was with the importance of these sentiments deeply written upon her heart that she began to imitate the example of the Savior, and rise while the world around her were yet slumbering, in order to commune with God, to "search the Scriptures," and to present afresh, through the atoning Lamb, her body, soul, and spirit, with all her redeemed powers, to God; in order that her whole existence, by being thus renewedly laid upon the altar, might be ready for the Master's use in any department of labor to which he might appoint her, whether in her family or in the world. And here it might be well to state in reference to the members of her household, she proved that it was not an unmeaning service to follow in the footsteps of God's ancient servant Job, who arose early and bore the individual members of his family before the mercy-seat, by presenting the offerings, ordained by God, in their behalf, in order, through this medium, to crave the acceptance of their persons. Even thus she found it to be a very satisfactory exercise, to present, through the merits of the sin-atoning Sacrifice, not only her own soul, but also the case of each individual member, imploring for them individually that they might be permitted, through the merits of Christ, to abide as in the presence of God, under the direct rays of the Sun of righteousness, during the day.

And often had she reason to observe throughout the day, that not only the members of her household, but also her house, which had also been specially consecrated to God, were held under a divine influence, and the Spirit,.

"Which, as a peaceful dove,

Flies the abode of noise and strife,"

was felt to be brooding over that household, in answer to the supplications of the early hour. Thus prepared to spend the day in the peaceful presence of God, they loved, when assembled around the family altar, to sing, --

"How happy, gracious Lord, are we,

Divinely drawn to follow thee

Whose hours divided are

Between the mount and multitude,

Our days are spent in doing good,

Our nights in praise and prayer.

"With us no melancholy void,
No moments linger unemploy'd,
Or unimproved below;
Our weariness of life is gone,
Who live to serve our God alone,
And only thee to know.

The winter's night and summer's day
Glide imperceptibly away,
Too short to sing thy praise;
Too few we find the happy hours,
And haste to join the heavenly powers
in everlasting lays.

"With all who chant thy name on high,
And holy, holy, holy, cry,
A bright harmonious throng,
We long thy praises to repeat,
And ceaseless sing around thy seat
The new eternal song."

It was a prayer frequently presented, that the Spirit might so urge her onward, that she might not be permitted to rest short of any state of grace made possible by the death, and the present intercession of the Savior. She believed it to be a duty imposed by the highest obligation of love, on all professed followers of the Lord Jesus, to endeavor, by all possible means, to give faithful representation in their individual experience of the power of grace to transform to the uttermost. The weight of responsibility resting upon those who lower the standard, by an unfaithful representation, either by the living epistle of an unholy life, verbally, or in written communications, she saw to be so tremendous, that she was assured eternity alone could determine, its fearful magnitude.

She believed, in accordance with Scripture testimony, the sentiment comprehensively expressed by a recent writer, "Christ has taken glorified humanity to heaven, in order to represent us before the throne of mercy, and hath left his followers to be his representatives on earth;" and she verily believed that much of the infidelity, depopulating God's fair dominions, and so rapidly peopling the regions of despair, is owing to the untrue representation in life and sentiments given by a vast majority of unholy professors. That infidelity is the consequence resulting from these failures, and the correctness of the allusion just given, she saw to be directly inferred from the words of the Savior, John xvii, 21-23.

It was in view of these tremendous responsibilities that she so greatly desired to be urged onward by the persuasions of the Spirit, in order that she might apprehend that for which she had been apprehended by Christ, "and be able to give before the world a fair exhibition, in every department of life, of whatsoever things are honest, lovely, pure, and of good report. And in her domestic relations, as well as in those termed more spiritual duties, she often prayerfully presented the inquiry,

"But where can I resemble thee, And in thy God-like nature share? Thy humble follower let me be, Thy blessed likeness let me bear.

"Pure may I be, averse to sin, Just, holy, merciful, and true, And let thine image form'd within, Shine out in all I say or do."

When she first made up her mind that every earthly consideration should be in the highest degree subservient to the prominent object of attaining the witness of entire consecration, she had no other expectation than that of entering heart and soul into her earthly cares again, for the Lord had written this lesson upon her heart, "He that careth not for his own household is worse than an infidel;" and she did not, at this interesting point of her experience, intend to neglect them, but only resolved that they should cease to be absorbing until this assurance was gained; and it was at this precise point in her pilgrimage that Almighty grace gained a signal victory over a naturally over-anxious spirit.

She never afterward saw it necessary to enter heart and soul into the otherwise vexatious cares with which the mother of every family is surrounded, but found, after having chosen with her whole soul "the better part," that she could ever sing, -

Lo, I come with joy to do

My blessed Master's will:

Him in outward works pursue,

And serve his pleasure still.

Faithful to my Lord's commands,

I still would choose" the better part,

Serve with careful Martha's hands

And loving Mary's heart.

"Careful without care I am,

Nor feel the happy toil;

Kept in peace by Jesus' name,

Supported by his smile;

Joyful thus my faith to show,

I find his service my reward,

Every work I do below, I do it to the Lord."

And yet she never regarded a minute observance of the admonition, "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report," as more sacredly and scrupulously binding than from the period when the resolution was made that they should cease to be absorbing.

From that time she felt that the honor of God was as much concerned in judicious, external and internal household arrangements, as in closet duties. By the effective, pure, and lovely order and symmetry pervading all the works of God, she felt that man was being taught an ever-speaking and ever-enduring lesson.

But by a careful attention to the instructions of the blessed word, she found that much which had formerly augmented her cares was easily to be dispensed with, without any infringement either on the happiness of others or her own; and in many respects these omissions increased the happiness of all. Take, for instance, the admonition contained in the prophetic sentiment, "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar: yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judea shall be HOLINESS TO THE LORD OF HOSTS."

By this she observed that there was nothing with which she had a right to do that was either too high or too low to be inscribed with "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; " and she resolved not to give her approval to, or to permit her time to be absorbed with, any pursuit that would not unequivocally bear this inscription. And she gained, beyond all calculation, by resolving not to venture on questionable ground in reference to these things.

"O! I wish I could always be as happy as you are," said an aged professor to her one day. She felt deeply humbled by the observation, and hardly knew what to say in reply, thinking that to disclose the secret of her happiness would be to reprove the aged sister. But on looking to God, she felt it was required that she should say, to the glory of grace, "that she did not dare to be otherwise than happy," because she believed one command to be equally as binding as another. God had said, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "The Lord knew," she continued to say, "that we should have cares, otherwise he would not have made provision for the disposal of them as he has done, by inviting us to cast all our care upon him, with the assurance that he careth for us, thereby empowering us to comply with the requirement, rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." And she felt that these divine requisitions could not be complied with, without taking the most minute things, as well as those regarded as of the greatest magnitude, to God. It was her habit to decide the matter thus: "Is this of as much consequence to me as a hair of my head? If so, I will make my request known unto Him who hath said, `The very hairs of your head are numbered.'"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/phoebe-palmer/and-one-of-the-elders-answered-saying-unto-me-who-are-these-which-are-arrayed-in/>

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