

8. Education and Redemption (4Q 2020—Education)

Biblical Material: Gen. 1:26, 27; Isa. 11:1–9; 2 Tim. 3:14–17; 1 Kings 4:29–34; John 14:17; 1 Cor. 2:1–16.

Quotes

- If you keep thinking about what you want to do or what you hope will happen, you don't do it, and it won't happen. *Desiderius Erasmus*
- A nail is driven out by another nail. *Desiderius Erasmus*
- How aware are we of our own inner life, our spirituality—something so intangible yet so priceless? How much effort do we make to perceive that which is not obvious, which can neither be seen nor heard? I believe the exploration and enrichment of the human spirit is what determines our very humanity. *Daisaku Ikeda*
- We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. *Albert Einstein*
- Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it. *Henry Ford*

Questions

Why is it so important to think when it comes to concepts of salvation? What are the dangers in simply accepting old formulas as to how redemption happens? How can we best approach those with different ideas about God and his salvation? How do we “have the mind of Christ”? How do we remain open to developing ideas of truth?

Bible summary

Gen. 1:26, 27 tells us we're made in God's image. Isa. 11:1–9 tells of the “Root of Jesse” and the blessings of the future life. “But you must hold onto the things you've learned and are convinced are true. You know who taught you. From your childhood you've known the holy Scriptures which can give you understanding for salvation by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture inspired by God is useful for teaching, for confronting what is wrong, for setting us straight, and for telling us what is right. This is how God provides a thorough preparation for those who work for him to accomplish all that's good.” 2 Tim. 3:14–17 FBV. 1 Kings 4:29–34 describes Solomon's wisdom and his contributions. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth (John 14:17). 1 Cor. 2:1–16 talks about acquiring spiritual wisdom, and having the mind of Christ.

Comment

When it comes to our salvation, we need to know the Lord and to discover what he has done to reveal his true character. This means education—we ask questions and find answers.

All too often organized religion thinks it safest to stick with old formulas and well-worn clichés, especially when it comes to salvation. So let's consider some possible new thoughts. How do we tell others about redemption? Could it be that we do not have a monopoly on the truth? Do we need to rethink the way we “do” church? What of the role of women in ministry in our church—do our ideas/practices need reforming? Do we need to reform our administrative structures to make them more gospel-orientated?

We can certainly choose to think new thoughts as the Lord leads us! Truly, “the mind matters.” If we accept this as being a fundamental truism, then what follows? That it's wrong to

exclude thinking from our religious experience, in fact we should encourage it. That we should emphasize clear thinking in our theology, rather than make use of “dark speech.” We worship a God who makes sense, not a God who is fickle, capricious, and non-sensical. We need to make it clear that we reject the ideas suggesting:

- that religion does not have to make sense,
- that divinity can demand whatever it wants without reason,
- that life can be lived only by abandoning logic and rational thought,

This is greatest perversion of belief, for it denigrates the human brain that God created, and makes it operate at the level of mindlessness.

Ultimately, true knowledge, meaningful experience, and even the beginnings of science itself, depend on belief in a God who makes sense. In other words, without a God who makes sense, a Being who is rational and reasonable, then there is no ability to understand the world in this way. Such a world view depends on reproducible behavior—the concept that experiments can be repeated with consistent results. Only if cause and effect are established in a repeatable way can we make any sense of our environment. Only if the material world is seen as operating under natural laws can it be understood and harnessed for benefit and progress. Only if God is seen as logical and dependable and trustworthy as the Creator of natural laws can such concepts develop.

Otherwise we are in an unpredictable, confusing, and chaotic world in which all is magical and incomprehensible, with beliefs based on superstition and “lucky chance.” Survival is based on placating the unpredictable whims of gods and spirits; meaning and purpose make little sense; and the philosophy of life is fatalistic.

God is not irrational. He does not require his created beings to be irrational. Above all, faith is not irrational, and must never be portrayed as irrational. Faith is not “believing what you know ain’t so.” Nor is faith to be superstitious, gullible, or non-sensical. Nor is faith opposed to evidence, or investigation, or questions. This most of all when it comes to concepts of salvation! Redemption means being reconciled to God as trusting friends instead of rebellious enemies. What is required for this true *at-one-ment* with God is not primarily forgiveness and pardon but healing and change. Only by being transformed can hostile rebels find a place in God’s presence—only by becoming God’s friendly children—at one with their heavenly Father. “While we were his enemies, God made us his friends through the death of his Son, and so we can be absolutely sure that he will save us through the life of his Son.” Romans 5:10 FBV

Ellen White comments

We must not for a moment think that there is no more light, no more truth to be given us. We are in danger of becoming careless, by our indifference losing the sanctifying power of truth, and composing ourselves with the thought, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” [REV. 3:17.] While we must hold fast to the truths which we have already received, we must not look with suspicion upon any new light that God may send. {GW92 389-90}

...the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98-9}