No. 16.7

On the Love of Praise

Dec 26, 1818
John 3:11, 13. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Such is the character, as the Evangelist gives of some distinguished men among the Jews at the time of our Saviour. All the mighty acts which He performed could not bring the stubborn minds of a portion of His countrymen to a belief in His divine mission. What the Lord did what He said fell upon ears so hardened by prejudice or disappointment, that no impression could be made upon them. Yet the obstinacy of the Jews extends from the Evangelist something like an expression of wonder or lamentation. "But," says the historian, "though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." Still there were many who could not entirely shut their eyes or heavenly light. There were men among them who could not see all that Jesus did; and hear all that
he said, without secret by confessing, "truly this is the Son of God." They could not see them healings, they could not see the influence of a touch, or calling forth, the dead by the word of His power; they could not hear the sublime instructions of the transcendent truths, nor come from His lips. What this great personage was the delegate of heaven to man. Yet even these men did not give evidence to this feeling; they ventured not to tell the convictions of their hearts, their hearts were full; they suffered not the condemnation of God, and their souls were laboring to come forth in open expression. They suppressed what they could not but feel, and would not join the ranks of the suffering, distressed followers of He. But why did they not openly espouse the cause of Jesus? The historian tells us it was because they feared reproach and shame. Nevertheless, says he, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; not because of the observances they did not forsake him, but they were put out of the synagogue: "yet he adds, "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." They chum with too much goodness to their reputation among men, to give itself up what they knew to be truth. They dared not encounter disgrace, they had not the courage to face contumelies. They therefore crushed the better feelings of their hearts, and the convictions probably died away, and left them, like the rest of their countrymen, half ened, half blinded, and bewildered.

We have here, then, a remarkable instance of the defeasible effects, and the love of human applause, and unfeigned, untempered, may produce. It has been said that among the Jews, if not to deny their God, and to suppress the acknowledgment of their faith in Him, this was scarcely better. And similar effects it always has, and always will produce. It is so simple, so much to complying, too reasoning, so correctly composed, will walk in purity, uplifted in the path of rectitude, and seek his eye, fixed on that line of duty and the will of God has prescribed to man. Many have sacrificed even their virtue and conscience, that they might regulate themselves in the applause of mankind, that their ears might drink the music of praise. The love of praise leads eating many, then perhaps
other temptation could have felt it strong. It is a passion, as disguise itself under a thousand various forms. Sometimes we deceive ourselves by calling it a profit or decent regard to the opinion of our fellow men, sometimes it stains the character, and belongs to the love of honorable and noble acts. Sometimes we regard it as arising from an anxious and innocent wish to have our own feelings or actions approved by those of others. In some forms of art it attends us in almost every department of existence. In the life of the artist, it serves as a stimulus to the labors of the nation. It calls forth creations as swift as the horse of him who makes them. It tends to make us, before we bring them to perfection, think the health is strength necessary to enjoy them. In short, almost from the cradle to the tomb, to be admired and to be praised is the ruling passion of man. It drivers in the breast of the child; it forces the soul of him who has reached the age of life, so rarely unfrequently it occas the beast of old age. But, my Lord, it is a most dangerous principle of action; it is often the uncontrolled of the hearts. If it be a good, it is a good uncontrolled. With one hand,

Do we, then, condemn the love of praise entirely without any reservation? Must we not out of consequence, for our health, the desire of applause? Shall men pay firm to gain the commendation of a good opinion of his fellow man? Are we to extinguish these desires of people, or seek repose from the approbation of those with whom we associate? By no means. This is required of us neither by reason nor by religion. 'A good name,' says Solomon, 'is better than precious ointment.' The love of praise, as ordered in itself, is separate from the abuse for it is holy, is certainly not an unwise, or unwise passion. If it be restrained by the understanding, confined within proper bounds, directed to right objects, it may serve the noblest purposes. It awakens the spirit to action, leads to stirrings after excellence, and might other wise never be called forth. It is a principle of society necessary for the use in the work of education. By teaching the youthful mind to strive for the praise of approbation,
If its superior, are give it a most encouraging motive to diligence, good behavior, &c. to various excellencies, &c. into the composition of a noble and virtuous character. It is its good influence, confined to children of the school. It goes abroad with men into the world, &c. animates them to high & virtuous effects. It compels them, in a sense of its existence in their external conduct, to work well. It is most necessary that the influence of a bad example &c. may forsake them. It is most necessary, that the influence of a bad example &c. may forsake them. It is most necessary, that the influence of a bad example &c. may forsake them.

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action not injurious to the purity of religious feelings.

But after every allowance has been made to this favorite passion for applause, still it must not be forgotten that it is a passion of dangerous tendency. It may easily become an absorbing principle and blow up every purer motive; and its influence is indeed most perniciously exciting. The love of praise every does demand the silence of conscience, to desert their duty, to turn a deaf ear to the voice of God. It is in itself innocent, peaceful; but of all mists motives to action, it is perhaps the most easily and frequently abused. While we are hesitating on the conflicts of ambition, or in the chase after the world's applause, our minds become too heated & tumultuous, to receive the gentle influence of our motives, and must descend peacefully in the heart, like the dews of heaven, in the silence of midnight. While we are engaged in sharper competition for the applause of man, we easily forget that there is a higher & juicier house, which should always interest all the best energy of our souls, which should make us forget all the rest. We should think of the better treasures which can never fade. Out of the habit of our dangerous abuse is not the only reason why we should be temperate & cautious in indulging the desire of praise. There are many other considerations which teach us by the same lesson. Some of these considerations I shall now point out to your notice.

1. We should not be too anxiously fond of the praise of the world, because after all our endeavors we may be unable to acquire it. Perhaps there is no pursuit in which we are so liable to disappointment at every step as in the pursuit of fame. If there be an object, the possession of it is so precious, that all our best and most devoted efforts may fail of obtaining it. That object certainly would not occupy the first place in our hearts, it should not be the rallying point of our hopes & fears, our wishes & desires. But such an object is the praise of man, the treatment of which is so in line with praise, as to make his happiness depend upon the acquisition of it, no other less reasonably, than he who grasps at a shadow.

2. We may submit to as many privations & sacrifices as we please, we may spend days of pain & usefulness, we may exhaust our energy & strength, we may exhaust all our treasures of time & of poverty; after all, the applause of man, that phantom, that we have labored, suffered, contested, may mock our present. We may be left to escape over the files of the world in bitterness of heart, that we had used every year in attempting to acquire the approbation of them,
The applause of mankind is frequently conferred or withheld in the most capricious manner. It is often at the behest of the most unexceptionable claims of justice. The judgment of the model is as fickle as inconsistent, as the various passions, of which the beauty of blind the eyes of men. It may do many good deeds, yet never be rewarded for them by the voice of praise; we may pass many years of virtuous exaltation in virtuous suffering, without a single eye, without a single voice, complacently showered upon us. Nay, sometimes, even while we are praying for them, & looking for applause, some one speaks so well that we shall be able to ask least to sit down & enjoy the reward of a fair reputation, or may not only fail of obtaining the object, when nearer than possible, but even possibly may become the victims of disapprobation. Instead of the music of praise, with which we expected to be rewarded, the ear aches at better or indifferent melody in our ears.

The brightness of another's reputation, while you are subjected with the passion for applause, you may be conceived from your dream of happiness, a fond, your fortune to be neglected in disgrace. Such is the uncertainty, attending the pursuit of fame among men; you may acquire it, but you may lose it, just as readily. To acquire it, you may even be subjected to the cruel despotism of procuring the contempt & scorn, instead of the applause of others.

But not so with the adoration of the Almighty. This is bestowed on principles, as lasting as the throne of His glory, as infallible as the presence of His power & influence. By the light of nature, by the light of revelation, as Saul shall have made known to us the terms on which we may hope & to this favor. These terms are confined in his perceptions & obedience to his hands. What does the d. obey & acquiesce of these, but to do justice, to love many, to walk humbly with thy God? I know entirely with these terms, we shall most certainly secure the affection of the Almighty, for his affection is not like the mere affection of man, nor the bond of lust, nor the pride of man, nor the mark our best of God's choicest persons, there is no description about it. He, also, cannot deceive us. We declare, has told us that he will surely grant his favors to his faithful children.
of the promise of the everlasting God must fail, before his servants can lose their crown. — Now, my friends, I well know you spend all your time in all your strength in seeking for the praise of man, and that as if you have done your best, you may never obtain. If on careless hearers of the praise of 

of God, if you obey his laws, you cannot fail to obtain. Thus, this ought not to be. The favour of man is uncertain as the morning rain; therefore set not your hearts when it: the favour of God is sure as the pledge of eternal truth can make it. Therefore to that, aspire, to that direct all the energy of your souls, to that raise the eye of admiration.

2. Another reason why we should not suffer the desire of praise to gain the ascendancy in our hearts, is because the predominant motive to our actions, is that even after we have acquired the long sought praise, we are liable everywhere to lose it. For too by no fault of our own, but solely by the caprice of those who confide. To day you are enjoying the felicity of the glory of a good name. Tomorrow, perhaps, the mind of our enmity will be filled with no source of discredit as generous conduct. For he is now accursed, and all praise may soon be reflected on abasement. — And when we have by a painful effort

found that we have but placed ourselves on an erroneous form, from that the least moment we may be precipitated with shame and disgrace. If we cannot accommodate ourselves to the prejudices and captivities of the world, if we cannot stifle the passions, or gratify the inclinations of those whom we depend on or are. — If we cannot decline from the path of duty to humour the follies of society; if we chance to be the associates of base and vanquished opinions, to other opinions, merely because they chance to be more popular than our own; if we have the boldness to say, that let all others serve whom they will, as for us we will serve the Lord, — if therefore is no religion as spreading, their triumphs, we are still determined to cleave to our God. Stills, though, no matter what form, we may subscribe our defection to be established, we are not what appears of a pleasure or a profit we may have received from others in the day of our popularity. — Still the probability is great that we may for a time at least become objects of derision or ridicule. And perhaps, that is many never again hearing expressions of warm commendation, as were once so freely
a stone of wood to laugh to see the prime fault, though he cannot gather it". If then you value your peace of mind, strive for the lasting favour of God, instead of the transient short-lived praise of man.

3. We should not indulge in excessive kindness for all men, because it disheartens, and if it becomes the principal end of our actions, we shall certainly mislead us, and probably give occasion for guilelessness. He, who acts only for praise, does only for fame, will find himself without any principle of calculation, and he can calculate. His conduct must vary with the every varying wishes and feelings of the multitude, he must do what is fashionable in the day, what is right.

he must give up the laws of God to the prescription of the world, resign the authority of conscience to the authority of these, to whom he looks for reputation. It is evident that he, who is governed by no better motives than these, will be likely to neglect every good temperable stem in every good action, and will not conduct to his fame, or of any restraint his progress in the pursuit of praise. There are duties, and the conscience of main, and the conscience of the world sometimes meets us in fashion, all the practices of which may oppose to that of contempt.
such duties will usually be neglected by him who lives in the breath of applause; for he does not see times when his service is reputable and useful. He has not courage enough to make minds enough to engage in the reigning follies, to tread the path of his duty with a firm and unequivocally, through good and evil report. It was this passion for fame, which hardened the heart of mankind the eyes of many of the fons, that they could deny the claims of as the Messiahs of God. One turns himself towards this fruitful source of delusive effects. I know you,” says he, “that we have not the love of God in you. How can you believe, who receive election one of another, if seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (1 Corinthians 16:22.)

The man who loves praise extravagantly must become the duke of every one who can flatter and deceive. “He who loves flattery must be very fortunate if he finds one conscious of him. Very few of the finds not one to declare him. In such the man, whose soul is absorbed by the passion for applause, has thrown himself on a troubled sea, where he will the mercy of every mind every move. It will not be long if he be not at last dashed upon the rocks of adversity in ruin. It is not generally that modest man virtues, but gain the applause of mankind.” For gods angels offline

then, but the busy world overlooks them.” Shewing that every excellence are those with the world admires they are.

For he who seeks the praise of men, is very much in danger of losing his relish for the world’s great and generous virtues of the year. Yet, to imitate those actions are with the false judgment of the world has thrown an injurious glare, a splendiferous error.

Such, thus, are the dangerous consequences of having the praise of men more than the praise of God. For then while no reason is required to seek by integrity your the applause of the wise; good men, it is our duty thus to seek this noble reward of the praise of the good. No duties in this world may be of the highest of that affection which awaits the deeds of virtue the aspirations of pity in the mansion of our dear Father in high heaven. We must not forget that the desire of humankind should never become the chief and predominant motive to every our heart—good has created us, he has given us the means of grace, helps to holiness, he has made known to us his will; therefore he has a right to require of us that first above all things we should seek his favor in this life. His loving kindness, which is better than life; let this suffice. 

the sublime objects of our endeavours; & then, however that
bitter we may from a ridicule, however, achen may come
over our hopes of human applause, however, the brightness of our
name may be tarnished by envy or malice, still we may have con-
cfidence in the affection of the Almighty, that confidence, wher earth cannot give, wher angels cannot take away.

Dec. 1819.

O there, who art the source of all good, who
grant strength to our weakness, who art our guide to the
world we live in, our souls a long for grateful
for our salvation. We pray that they may be
the rule of actions, if the glory the end of our lives. Give
us, we entreat thee, from all entreaty to love for the
applause of man, from all incitement, desires for the
supplicating praise of our fellow mortals, from that
spirit of attachment to the fleeting present of a world
and may lead us to direct our duties to forget the
world. May we seek first of all things the peace of
a good conscience, our application, by going on yonder
ing in the path of thy commandments, by submitting
thy holy will in all things, by walking in the
steps of our Saviour, by abiding in our duty with steadfast
in firmness, st prize to attain, thy favournd is life &
thy being kindness, oh, is better than life. Give us, oh,
y, to love thee more, serve thee better for thy day long,
and may we be admitted to the presence of the glory,
where we shall live secure thee as the angels in heaven.
At home, Dec. 26th, 1879, forenoon.