

THE DEMONSTRATOR

By

Curtis Dickinson

It is erroneous for the modern demonstrators, marching in the streets, to claim that they have any Biblical or Christian basis for their actions. The power of God is in the basic truth as it is revealed in the Bible and believed by men, not in the coercive power of pressure and force.

However, in the historic Biblical record there is a demonstration that tops all demonstrations and which provides an understanding of God and His eternal purpose for man. It is a demonstration totally unique and yet universally comprehensive; one that is totally devoid of coercive pressure, and yet the most compelling of any demonstration ever made.

Paul writes that we Christians are saved and called according to God's "own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:9-10). This text tells us that the purpose of God has been manifested - demonstrated, and that the meaning of life and immortality has now been openly shown or demonstrated through Jesus.

GOD DEMONSTRATED

Jesus said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Here He claims to be a demonstration of God. This does not imply that Jesus was only a demonstration. He was God in the flesh, the only begotten Son of God; God incarnate. As Emil Brunner has said, "Through God alone can God be known." But after confessing the fact of his Deity, there still remains to be said just what God is like.

Well, Jesus shows us. It is as if He said, "If you want to know just what the Father is like, look at me, and I'll show you."

Does God have power? If so, how does He use it? Then Jesus commands the elements (Matt. 8:26), destroys the fig tree that produced no fruit (Matt. 21:20), creates wine from water (John 2:1-11), produces bread and fish (Matt. 14:13-21) and resurrects the dead (Luke 8:41-56, 7:11-15, John 11:43).

Does God love men? See how Jesus is moved to tears as he contemplates men's rebellion (Luke 19:41), and how his compassion is stirred as he views men in weakness, ignorance and sin. He offers to bear man's burden and finally to bear his sin.

What of Justice? God is absolutely just. Jesus demonstrated this in His condemnation of the hypocritical Pharisees, and in the way he personally drove the evil money-mad Jews

from the temple. He was as stern with Himself, as God is stern with others, for Jesus so controlled his own life that he was completely without sin (Heb. 4:15).

If we want to know how God answers prayer, we can look at the way Jesus quickly responded to those who came to him day and night. The sick were healed immediately, upon the basis of their faith. Even those at a distance were healed, without Jesus being bodily present (John 4:46-54). Also there is a demonstration of withholding an answer to prayer, in order to provide something even better in the case of Mary and Martha who sought Him to heal Lazarus. Instead, Jesus allowed him to die, but later raised him from the grave (John 11:14).

The personality and attributes of God are seen in a day-to-day walk among men, by a man, the man Jesus Christ. His is a simple and yet profound demonstration of God.

MAN DEMONSTRATED

“Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26). It is not surprising therefore that the one who demonstrates God, should also be the one who demonstrates what man is intended to be, and can be. In referring to Jesus, the Gospel writers speak of him more often as “son of man” than as “son of God.” The writer of Hebrews carefully shows that the savior was fully man, that he partook of human flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14-15). When Jesus walked among men, they were looking at a man who was truly in the image of God.

It is not necessary for me to point out the superior qualities of Jesus. This would be like using a flashlight to show somebody the sun. It is significant that no man has ever been loved so much as the man Jesus Christ. His praises have been sung since before He was born, and in eternity the saints will continue to sing of His worthiness (Rev. 5:9). This fact, that men of all nations and all ages love and honor Jesus, is an indication of the desire of such men to fulfill that for which they were created: to reflect the image of God.

If we say that we desire Godliness we mean that we want to be as much like God as possible. Well, we have a concrete example of one man who attained this goal: Jesus. And in doing so He demonstrated the kind of Man that God wants every one of his creatures to be.

In view of this, how can we justify any willful deviation from His example? How excuse ourselves on the basis that we are “only human?” The example of perfect humanity is One who did “always the things that are pleasing to the heavenly Father.” He is One who stated, “Which of you convicts me of sin?”, and of whom Pilate was compelled to honestly say, “I find no fault in Him.”

DEMONSTRATION OF A SINNER

After considering Christ as the demonstration of God and also a demonstration of man at his best, what I am now going to say may come as a shock. Christ is also a demonstration of a sinner in the hands of a righteous judge! Consider what the Bible says: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us ...”

(Gal. 3:13). “He who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf ...” (2 Cor. 5:21), and “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

While Jesus had no sin of His own, he assumed OUR sins. Peter writes that “he bore our sins in His body upon the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). Having accepted the burden of sin, Jesus was then treated by God as God treats, and will treat in the day of Judgment, all sinners. First he was deserted and died alone. Even God Himself rejected him and turned away from him, so that Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). This was not merely a cry of a confused and frustrated man in the throes of pain. Jesus, for the first time in his life as a man found himself completely forsaken by the Father. Secondly he was helpless. Once he had assumed this role of sinner, he could not resist the punishment for sin without rejecting the role. So sinners, in the Day of Judgment will find them selves totally forsaken by God, whom they had rejected all their lives. They will be helpless to escape the punishment that will come upon them. The Revelation describes them as seeking places to hide to escape judgment, but helpless to do so. Third, Christ died for sin: “The Wages of sin is death.” Having assumed the sins of the sinner, Jesus died as a sinner, and thus demonstrated for all men that in Judgment, the sinner will be put to death.

We know that the cross is a demonstration of Judgment because of what Jesus said about it: “Now is the judgment of this world ... And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. But this He said, signifying by what manner of death he should die” (John 12:31-33).

It is for this reason — that death is the penalty for sin — that we are baptized into Jesus’ death, for “he that has died is justified from sin” (Rom. 6:7). When we are united with the death of Jesus, the penalty is paid, by Him. Justice is met! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” because in Him the penalty for sin is already exacted.

It is difficult to find hope and assurance in Christ’s death, if the punishment for sinners is something else - such as a torture chamber that perpetually burns, but does not finally bring death. The finality and totality of the punishment is demonstrated for all to see in Jesus, the representative sinner, and thus representative dier, forsaken by God and suffering the pain and shame of death. The sinner can look forward with unmistakable clarity to a day of reckoning when God will forsake him as he has forsaken God; to helplessly facing his doom with no alternative; and to the final execution, a death that is eternal and inexorable. “The soul that sins, it shall die.”

If this demonstration of judgment upon sinners had been left within scriptural context, and not clouded with a great deal of speculative theology about the mystery of “souls” and the medieval teaching of purgatory and the Jonathan Edwards type preaching about God and sadistic saints thrilling over the sight of men and women and children writhing forever in searing flames, — if men had stuck to the simple Bible language that we either

live or die, believe or perish, receive life or death — the Gospel message would have had far greater impact upon men than it has. I do not suggest that one has to understand fully what the final death by fire will be like before he can have a faith in Christ that saves. But think what great import the preaching of Paul, Peter and John had, and these men, in recorded sermons and in writing, present Jesus as undergoing death for us, so that we might be saved from that death, to have life! And, one certainly does have to believe that Jesus DIED for his sins, before he can be said to “believe the gospel,” and such belief is indeed essential to salvation.

DEMONSTRATION OF IMMORTALITY

The text says that Jesus “brought life and immortality to light.” For centuries men had debated about life after death. Job believed that he would be resurrected, and so did Abraham and David. Generally speaking, however, the concept of life after death was a mixture of Egyptian and Greek superstition and pagan philosophy. But when He burst forth from the grave and showed the disciples that he was still the same Jesus, in flesh and bone, there was no further need for speculation. Here was a man who was now immortal! The scripture says that He is the ONLY one who, as yet, has immortality! (1 Timothy 6:16). For 40 days he lived with the disciples, ate with them and daily rubbed shoulders with them. No wonder they went out filled with enthusiastic optimism and repelled all attempts to shut them up as they proclaimed the “resurrection of the dead.” They KNEW that Jesus was no vision, or apparition, nor mere bodiless spirit. They had no mystical ideas of dying and becoming a spirit or “ghost” floating about, appearing in séances and haunting the living! Jesus had demonstrated to them that an immortal man is one who is still a man, still the same man, yet with qualities that transcend the mortal; deathless and glorious qualities of the eternal.

Can there be any question about the purpose of God? There may be plenty surprises for us in the glorious eternity He has planned. But the general purpose is clear from the demonstration He has given. We know his purity, holiness, power, justice and love. We know what He wants a man to be - like Jesus. We also know the end of every man who comes to judgment in his sins - the cross demonstrates that. But we can know that the sins are removed in Christ, and that we shall live as Jesus lives “For we shall be like Him.”

Where will the Judgment find you; in the throes of death, or in the joys of life?

.....
Copyright © Curtis Dickinson. Formatted and Posted by Ken Fortier Ministries.
Permission is hereby granted by Mrs. Regina Dickinson to reproduce and distribute
Curtis' articles to as many as possible. This statement is to remain attached to this article
for permission to be valid. Vol. VI. Number 12.
.....