

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine.

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
The honors of our Savior God,
When the salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the pow'r of sin.

Our flesh and sense must be denied,
Passion and envy, lust, and pride;
While justice, temp'rance, truth, and love,
Our inward piety approve.

Devotion bears our Spirits up,
While we expect that blessed hope,
The bright appearance of the Lord,
And faith stands leaning on his Word.

Issac Watts (1674-1748)

Talk Without the Walk

"But do not ye after their (Scribes and Pharisees) works: for they say, and do not," said Jesus.

Matthew 23:3

These were words of prohibition that Jesus spoke to the multitude and His disciples perhaps in the presence of some Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus' words warn against practicing these works! Why? They are the practices of those who have the talk without the walk. Yes, they talk about good religion, but it is not in evidence in them so don't emulate them. They can tell you what to do, but they do not practice it. These are "Do as I say, but do not as I do religionists." What they know is never evident in how they behave! The one definitive word describing them is "hypocrisy." Big on talk little on walk! They strain at gnats and swallow down camels. James declared, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Here is the crunch of the

matter that Jesus brought out and James makes a stern application on. What? Such a person is self-deceived, because they do not have true Christianity.

There are at least two elements in what Jesus brought up. Let us pose them in two questions. *First*, what is said? What they say may even be true, but that is not the point of it. This brings up the next question: *Second*, what do they practice? Well as the old saying goes, “They do not practice what they preach.” What they say is not what they practice. A sort of bait and switch. They talk about doing, but they don’t do. And as noted, the Apostle James said they had deceived themselves. Remember Paul warned, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. 6:7).

John Bunyan in *“Pilgrims Progress”* has a character named “Talkative” based on this very text of “They say, and do not.” Talkative was a tall man who looked better at a distance than he did close up. Faithful had been walking with him on the journey toward the Celestial City. He deceived Faithful with his supposed delights in things pleasant and things wonderful relative to Holy Scripture. They had some long conversations and Talkative stated, “All that I know very well, for a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven (quoting John 3); I could give you a hundred Scriptures to prove this.” Talkative expatiated more and Faithful began to wonder, and he walked up to Christian and said softly, “What a brave companion have we got! Surely this man (Talkative) will make a very excellent pilgrim.” Christian just smiled at Faithful and said, “This man with whom you are so taken will deceive with his tongue....” Faithful asked if he knew him, “Yes, better than he knows himself.” “What is he,” asked Faithful. Christian replied, “His name is Talkative; he lives in our town.... He is the son of Say-well. He lives in Prating Row, and is known to all that are acquainted with him by the name of Talkative of Prating Row; and in spite of his fine tongue, he is a sorry fellow.” Faithful disclosed that “he seems a very good man. I have been deceived by him.” Christian replied, “Deceived! you may be sure of it. Remember the proverb, ‘They say, and do not;’ but the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”

The following description was given: “His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savor. There is there neither prayer nor sign of turning from sin. He is the very stain, reproach, and shame of religion to all that know him. It can hardly have a good word in all that end of the town where he dwells, because of him. For my part, I am of opinion that he has, by his wicked life, caused many to stumble and fall, and will be, if God prevent not, the ruin of many more.” Faithful noted, “Well, I see that saying and doing are two different things, and hereafter I shall watch for the difference between them.” Christian explained, “They are two things, indeed, and are as unlike as are the soul and the body. This, Talkative is not aware of but thinks that hearing and saying will make a good Christian, and thus he deceives his own soul. Hearing is but as the sowing of the seed;

talking is not sufficient to prove that fruit is indeed in the heart and life. And let us assure ourselves that, at the judgment, men shall be judged according to their fruits.”

Faithful had a heart-to-heart talk with Talkative questioning him and declaring, “Because I saw you were quite free to talk, and I feared that you had only notions about things. Besides, to tell you all the truth, I have heard of you that you are a man whose religion lies in talk, and that your life gives your mouth profession the lie.” The concluding words of Talkative were “I must conclude you are some peevish or cross man, not fit to be talked with; and so, adieu.”

Then Christian came up to Faithful and said, “I told you how it would happen; your words and his heart could not agree. He had rather leave your company....”

Matthew Henry declared, “Their practice was no way agreeable either to their preaching or to their profession; for *they say, and do not*; they teach out of the law that which is good, but their conversation gives them the lie; and they seem to have found another way to heaven for themselves than what they show to others. See this illustrated and charged home upon them, Rom. 2:17-24. Those are of all sinners most inexcusable that allow themselves in the sins they condemn in others, or in worse. This doth especially touch wicked ministers, who will be sure to have their portion appointed them with hypocrites (Matt. 24:51); for what greater hypocrisy can there be, than to press that upon others, to be believed and done, which they themselves disbelieve and disobey; pulling down in their practice what they build up in their preaching; when in the pulpit, preaching so well that it is a pity they should ever come out; but, when out of the pulpit, living so ill that it is a pity they should ever come in.... Such will *be judged out of their own mouths*. It is applicable ... great talkers, but little doers; *the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Vox et praeterea nihil - mere sound (or voice and nothing more).*”