

Only Two Kinds of Men

Scripture

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV).

Commentary

Here is the whole of mankind divided into two groups: Natural, those who have not the Holy Spirit of God residing in them, and Spiritual. We would love to subdivide the distinctions between these two determinations, but we do so at risk of confusion.

Somehow it goes against our character to be so black and white. We equivocate on such matters because we are often confused about our own condition. Our lack of spiritual discipline often leads into a state of spiritual stupor. We remember being saved and living for Christ, but our actions now seem to place us into another camp. Since that camp doesn't really exist, we create it in our mind.

These newly defined conditions are called by names like, “carnal Christian,” and “backslidden” believer. These technical terms are created to provide a salve so that men may remain in their condition and squelch the cries of conscience.

I would never argue that a man cannot find himself in a state of spiritual confusion. Surely this has likely happened to all true believers. However, I would argue that when we find ourselves in such a dire condition, we should not give it a label and rest in that. Instead, we must labor to ensure that we are indeed spiritual men and women. To this end we are not without guidance.

As it is written: “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious. Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” Therefore, to you who believe, [He is] precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once [were] not a people but [are] now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg [you] as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by [your] good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:1-12 NKJV)

Prayer

Father, do not allow us to be content in our waywardness. Stir us by your Holy Spirit. Remind us not to rest in some label when it is your Spirit agitating our conscience, convicting us of sin. Lord you have promised to never leave us nor forsake us. May we act as we believe! Amen.