

Eric Butterworth Speaks

Essay #8 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

We receive a large volume of correspondence and some of it contains questions relative to the insights shared on the morning broadcast. Today, I am going to deal with some of the queries that come to us most frequently.

Q. "What is the meaning of the Bible statement that money is the root of all evil?" First of all, nowhere in the entire Bible is this statement to be found. This shows how so many Bible teachings are taken out of context and used to justify various situations or to suit someone's purpose. There is nothing wrong with money; indeed, it is a useful, convenient, practical means of fair exchange, and its use is fundamental to modern economy. What the Bible says is that "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." Whatever problems can be traced to money have arisen due to man's attitude toward it, his greed and selfishness, his covetousness.

So, the need is not to eliminate money from common usage or from our own individual existences; the need is to alter and reform and modify the attitudes many of us have toward money. Bless your money as a wonderful symbol of God's rich, bountiful substance, so that it may bless you in turn and so that we may all lift up our consciousness into a larger frame of life, dwelling not so much on what money can do for us, but rather what we can do in the flow of creative ideas and creative service, which should then attract the substance or money we need in our lives.

Q. "What can be done for the person who always feels poor? Who although he prays for prosperity never quite has enough money to meet his needs?" This strikes at the heart of a difficulty experienced by so many of us. Paul declared that his God would fill every need according to His riches in glory; however, Paul did not say that God would fill in anyone's lack! The person who claims that he always feels poor really means that he has a sense of lack. This is typically a strong feeling, which must be changed and obliterated, if the condition is going to be met. Lack, emptiness, poverty, failure--all these have no reality in God; these are simply beliefs in the consciousness of the individual. When this particular questioner described himself in his letter to me as always feeling poor, he answered his own question. He and so many others need to change their thought of themselves and know that in spirit they are rich children of God. Then they will be able to get into the consciousness of riches and to feel the free flow of affluence.

A person may think he feels poor because he doesn't have enough to meet his needs; actually, he doesn't have enough to meet his needs because he feels poor. With a change of thought and the elimination of feelings of poverty and lack, the sought-after flow will begin to move into his life. This is more easily said than done, but at least the way is pointed out; the direction we need to go in is indicated to us. Do not waste time feeling sorry for yourself because even though you have prayed your needs are not met. Accept that your needs cannot be met until you change your self-image; until you come from behind your sense of personal limitation.

Q. "Do you believe in or have communion?" I must answer both yes and no; yes for the true meaning of communion, but no for the ritual of communion. The word communion implies communion with oneness, and of course I believe in oneness. What I reject is the ritual which comes up in our Christian religion as it does in all religions, making religion for so many the performance of a series or rites. For those to whom only symbols are meaningful and an aid to spiritual help, these rites serve an important purpose; but unfortunately these rituals become a widespread substitute for genuinely spiritual living, for actual communion or oneness with God. In this way rites, symbols, rituals can in the long run be worse than no practice of religion at all, tending as it does to inhibit spiritual growth. It is easy for a person to assume that, having performed certain rituals which he has been taught are required, nothing more need be done--by him at any rate; therefore, he does not strive to tap the depths within himself.

Do you remember a few years ago the fad of painting-by-the-number kits? With

your little paintbrush you matched up the number on an outlined area of your canvas with the number on one of many tubes of paint and eventually you had a presentable painting before you. It was temporarily satisfying, giving you a sense of pseudo-accomplishment, but without a bit of real creativity on your part. Until we start to create by ourselves, whether in painting or in growing in our sense of communion with God, we are actually hampered and constricted by leaning on something someone else has figured out for us. A tiny child can start to get around by using his walker, but unless he is permitted to try walking without any artificial help, his real walking will be slowed and the development of the necessary muscles will be hindered.

I am declaring that communion is a vital process in achieving a sense of oneness with God, and by communion I mean prayer and meditation. In prayer and meditation symbols such as the proper words can be very useful, as can various ritualistic practices; we may need instruction and guidance to help us grow toward a greater sense of oneness. However, ultimately, if we are going to grow in a sense of communion, we must put away the ritual and the symbols. Others may feel perfectly free to explore various means to achieve oneness with God. They must be free to develop a deeper sense of communion through whatever rituals they choose. What I have expressed here is my personal feeling; I do not take communion myself or encourage it, nor do I practice it in my meetings.

Q. "What exactly does 'worship' mean? Does it not imply that certain ceremonies in prayer should be followed?" This question is somewhat related to the one just above. The word "worship" comes from an ancient Greek word that meant to kiss like a dog licking his master's hand; to fawn, to prostrate one'sself in homage. It is also related to a similar ancient Hebrew word that meant prostrating one'sself in homage, bowing down, beseeching humbly or doing obeisance. All this is a good picture of god-worship reaching back into the earliest times.

You and I, however, must consider Jesus' statement that God is spirit; and that they that worship Him must worship in spirit. Jesus called for a new kind of worship in which mankind was freed from the concept of the superbeing up in the sky who demanded fawning before him and who reigned by terror and superstition. Jesus taught that spirit was omni-present mind found in all life and substance--everywhere, and He exhorted man to worship God, or spirit, not by outer form, but rather by attuning the human mind to the one mind in spirit and in truth. I have always felt that the real worship is the experience of worth-ship, with the emphasis not so much on out-reaching to a God far apart from us and outside of us, but rather more on what we achieve in our individual consciousness to cause us to feel a greater sense of worthiness, a greater flow of divine inspiration--this to me is what worship is.

Q. "How do you explain the ideal of love? And since I resist the idea of automatically loving everybody, can you make it easy for me to love other people?" Well, no, I can't make it easy, but perhaps I can make it more simple. The teaching of Jesus to love one another and the idea of the flow of love from consciousness requires much discipline--self-management, as it were. Try to understand it logically. Man is a creature of love which is at the very root of his nature. Your being requires love, you cannot exist without it, says Smiley Blanton in his fine book, Love or Perish. You are in trouble if someone or some happening evokes from you a feeling other than love. You must then consciously turn on this force of love, not because the other person deserves it, but because you need it. Booker T. Washington once resolved to permit no man to narrow and degrade his soul by causing hatred or a feeling of needing revenge in him. Make sure that you do not allow others to determine how you will think or feel or what your consciousness will be. None of us can go around loving everybody all the time; but realize that love is the continuity of the flow of spiritual force through you, enabling you to understand other people and what they do. It enables you to approve of them, not for their sake, but for yours. You love others in terms of relating to and responding to the divinity within. It is a far cry from a simplistic rule that you have just got to love everybody no matter what they do. It is divine law that you are a creature of love, and letting any-inhibit this flow of love within you will make trouble for you.