

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Robinson Crusoe's Change of Heart

Excerpts from The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe

Many of the older classic books had a spiritual lesson taught within their pages. The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, by Daniel Defoe, is one of those. The adventures of Robinson, who was ship-wrecked in the mid-1600s, told of his life and how he survived much of the time alone on a deserted island.

Many rewrites of the book and movies leave out the most important theme of the film — that he was disobedient to God and running from His will. Here are excerpts of what the character finally learned about himself:

“Why has God done this to me? What have I done to be thus used? My conscience presently checked me in that inquiry as if I had blasphemed, and me thought it spoke to me like a voice: ‘Wretch! Dost THOU ask what thou hast done? Look back upon a dreadful misspent life, and ask thyself what thou hast NOT done? Ask, why is it that thou

wert not long ago destroyed? Why wert thou not drowned in Yarmouth Roads; killed in the fight when the ship was taken by the Sallee man-of-war; devoured by the wild beasts on the coast of Africa, or drowned HERE, when all the crew perished but thyself? Dost THOU ask, what have I done?' I was struck dumb with these reflections, as one astonished, and had not a word to say - no, not to answer to myself, but rose up pensive and sad, ... my thoughts were sadly disturbed, and I had no inclination to sleep ...

"... and as the few books I had saved lay there too, I took out one of the Bibles which I mentioned before, and which to this time I had not found leisure or inclination to look into. I say, I took it out....

"... having opened the book casually, the first words that occurred to me were these, 'Call on Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' These words were very apt to my case and made some impression upon my thoughts at the time of reading them, though not so much as they did afterward....

"... that I began to say, as the children of Israel did when they were promised flesh to eat, 'Can God spread a table in the wilderness?' so I began to say, 'Can God Himself deliver me from this place?' And as it was not for many years that any hopes appeared, this prevailed very often upon my thoughts; however, the words made a great impression upon me, and I mused upon them very often....

“... But before I lay down, I did what I never had done in all my life – I kneeled down and prayed to God to fulfill the promise to me that if I called upon Him in the day of trouble, He would deliver me. After my broken and imperfect prayer....

“JULY 4. - In the morning, I took the Bible; and beginning at the New Testament, I began seriously to read it, and imposed upon myself to read a while every morning and every night, not tying myself to the number of chapters, but long as my thoughts should engage me. It was not long after I set seriously to this work till I found my heart more deeply and sincerely affected by the wickedness of my past life. The impression of my dream revived, and the words, ‘All these things have not brought thee to repentance,’ ran seriously through my thoughts. I was earnestly begging God to give me repentance when it happened providentially, the very day that, reading the Scripture, I came to these words: ‘He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and to give remission.’ I threw down the book, and with my heart as well as my hands lifted up to heaven, in a kind of ecstasy of joy, I cried out aloud, ‘Jesus, thou son of David! Jesus, thou exalted Prince and Saviour! give me repentance!’ This was the first time I could say, in the true sense of the words, that I prayed in all my life; for now I prayed with a sense of my condition and a true Scripture view of hope, founded on the encouragement of the Word of God; and from this time, I may say, I began to hope that God would hear me.

“Now I began to construe the words mentioned above, ‘Call on Me, and I will deliver thee,’ in a different sense from what I had ever done before; for then I had no notion of anything being called DELIVERANCE, but my being delivered from the captivity I was in... But now I learned to take it in another sense: now I looked back upon my past life with such horror, and my sins appeared so dreadful, that my soul sought nothing of God but deliverance from the load of guilt that bore down all my comfort... And I add this part here, to hint to whoever shall read it, that whenever they come to a true sense of things, they will find deliverance from sin a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction....

“... I never had once the words ‘Thank God!’ so much as on my mind, or in my mouth; nor in the greatest distress had I so much as a thought to pray to Him, or so much as to say, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me!’ no, nor to mention the name of God unless it was to swear by and blaspheme it. I had terrible reflections upon my mind for many months, as I have already observed, on account of my wicked and hardened life past, and when I looked about me and considered what particular providences had attended me since my coming into this place, and how God had dealt bountifully with me - had not only punished me less than my iniquity had deserved but had so plentifully provided for me - this gave me great hopes that my repentance was accepted and that God had yet mercy in store for me.”

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Rom. 10:13

Not by Argument

J. C. Jones

It is commonplace to think that an argument can convert a soul or change a person's actions. Conquer a man by arguing, and as a rule, you only confirm him in his error.

Last Monday, I looked at a picture titled "Conquered, but Not Subdued." The young lad in the painting was conquered by his mother. There he stood, with his face half turned towards the wall. One could see determination in his mouth, defiance in his eye, and anger in his nostrils. He was conquered but not subdued. Drive a sinner in argument to a corner so that he cannot escape, he most likely will not change his ways.

You have all seen sheet lightning. They flash. They dazzle, but they never kill. Arguments, after all, are only sheet lightning — flashing, dazzling, enlightening, but rarely changing anything.

I say nothing against giving logic. Have as much of it from the pulpit as you can, and personal encounters, but logic will not save or change too many.

God can never save you by argument. Too many would even rebelliously defy the Almighty in a direct debate. However, one can be changed and wooed when spiritual knowledge is taken by the Holy Spirit and convicts one's soul. It is His revelation, delivering, and reasoning to one's situation and soul that will result in any change.

“Arguments seldom change one’s mind. However, we still need to be the ‘delivery boy’ of the Truth, but only the Holy Spirit can do any converting!”

Unchanged

Beecher

There are scores of men who live for the flesh. They live under the dominion of their senses, yet they often live with full knowledge of truth from God’s Word. None know it better than they.

Some men have read every word of Scripture. Some are familiar with every argument and statement in theology. There are even men that have known and have seen much of the power of God in revivals. Still, there is within them that fixed, rooted, toughened life of sin that refuses to yield itself to any power which can be wielded merely by the hands of men. Too often, they die in their sins, unchanged by the truth they heard.

“Before anyone is saved or changed they usually have to get to the ‘bottom of their barrel.’ Unfortunately, for some it is lower in the barrel than it is for others.”