

GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.



BEWARE, SELECTIVE JUSTICE EVERYWHERE



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BEWARE, SELECTIVE JUSTICE EVERYWHERE

 BY NTK

The recent death of Father Stan Swamy under judicial custody in Mumbai and the demolition of a church in New Delhi attracted the attention of many around the globe. Many see it as a sign of growing intolerance and hatred towards Christians in India. By the way, both the incidents happened under the watch of judiciary.

Father Stan Swamy was arrested for his alleged connections with a banned outfit. Before the court could make a final judgement on his appeal for bail, he passed away while he was under treatment in a hospital. Regarding the demolition in New Delhi, according to reports it was built on an encroached government property and the structure was pulled down as a result of a court order, that too through the efforts of another Christian. The argument of many Christians in Delhi is that there are many other religious places all over India on encroached land.



Compared with many other neighbouring countries, Christians in India are still enjoying much freedom and we must praise God for that. The founding fathers of this nation adopted a constitution that guarantees enough freedom to believe, practice and propagate one's faith. At the same time, how much of this constitutional right is practically available to each citizen is a different question.

FLAWED LAW

Not only about religious freedom, even on many other matters we can notice that certain people in India act as if they are above the law. They feel free to do anything they want. They don't fear the law, and the law too often remains silent or lenient with them.

The result of such selective justice in India is visible in every area of life, like business, politics, religion, etc. It is due to such mockery of judicial system that certain people die waiting for a legitimate bail, while some others easily move around even after having a dozen cases filed against them.

Same with the encroachment issue; there are people who took it as a business. They grab any vacant land, develop it gradually and sell it off. The law enforcement agencies never see all such illegal activities, especially in the cities. However the same agencies are zealous to act against some others. What does it mean? What can we learn from all these irregularities prevailing in this land?

“ *Let the separation between you and the world be final and irreversible. Say, 'Here I go for Christ and His Cross, for the faith of the Bible, for the laws of God, for holiness, for trust in Jesus; and never will I go back, come what may'.*

 Charles Spurgeon

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

A true Christian will always seek to live by the law of the land where he resides. We ought to remember that we are not supposed to circumvent the law as many others do. We cannot even search for loopholes in the rules to overcome it.

Let the privileged and powerful do what they like, but let us be true to God and the authorities irrespective of the level of their integrity. Particularly, when there are people who look for an occasion to demoralize and demonize Christians using the law of the land, let us not give them an opportunity.

Our duty as born again Christ-lovers is to communicate the message of Christ through our words and deeds. It's not a healthy practice for believers to indulge in the social, political issues prevailing around us. Yes, seeing the injustice and exploitation of the poor and the marginalised, one may be challenged to raise a voice against that. However, our response should be confined to the limits set forth in the word of God.

Consider the times when the Lord Jesus was on earth and that of apostles. There were enough social problems in those days yet we don't see any of them gathering a crowd against the government or making any effort to overthrow the regime. Instead the Lord said, *“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”* (Matthew 22:21b) Apostles Paul wrote, “Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.” (Romans 13: 7) The scripture teaches that it is God who allows a ruler to sit on the throne and it is He who removes him. (Romans 13:1; Daniel 2:21).

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Romans 13:1

And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Daniel 2:21

HEAVENLY CITIZENS

It is true, the Lord Jesus and His disciples spoke about the evil prevailing among mankind but never involved in political and social matters. The Lord Jesus Himself made it clear, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. We as followers of Jesus Christ are not here to make this world a better place but to invite men and women for a better place through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we should be blind to the needs of the fellow citizens. We ought to sympathize with the poor and needy, but that should not be by sacrificing our primary responsibility of exalting the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Moreover, though we are living in this world, we have a different value system and a different goal in life. (John 17: 14, 18) “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:21) That's why Apostle Paul warns, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2Corinthians 6:14)

A careful consideration of the above-mentioned verses and similar passages in the Bible reveals that a born again Christian cannot come together along with unbelievers under one yoke because it's unequal. Any effort from the believer's part in love and compassion for the underprivileged should never be a cause for misinterpretation of Christ and His followers.

Yes, the Lord Jesus commands us to live as salt and light in this world. (Matthew 5: 13 – 16) Definitely, it is the presence of God's people in the society that gives light, taste and even a divine protection for the land. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility to see that the enemy does not have a reason to rejoice over us. (1Timothy 5:14b) Beware of the real state of affairs and behave prudently.

“

If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest.”

 Corrie Ten Boom

”

DESIRE TRANSFORMATION

*"For we are his workmanship"
- Ephesians 2:10a*

 By Shawn Abigail, Canada

God is working on our personalities, character and lives to create something pleasing in His sight. God is the Master Craftsman, and He is moulding and shaping us into something He can use and something which will be pleasing in His sight. When we go through troubles or even persecutions, we should rejoice because God will use all things for His purpose.

Young people particularly should value this thought, that we are God's workmanship. Too often we can judge ourselves by worldly standards (physical beauty, money, possessions and even worldly education and attainment). If we lack these things we may feel bad about ourselves. But God is not interested in these things. God is interested in only one thing; glorifying Himself by transforming us into the image of Christ.

Just as a knot in a piece of wood can slow a carpenter, we can slow down the process of our transformation. God works quickest in those who are hungering and yearning to be transformed. Do you want God's best for your life? Are you yielding to Him? Are you working with the Workman to bring about a transformed life?



BRIEF NOTES ON TABERNACLE

 By Charles .E. Wigg , Australia

There are several differing views held by Bible scholars on the Tabernacle and a brief description of some are given below.

The Tabernacle a type of Christ:

Most hold the view that the Tabernacle is a type of Christ, of different aspects of His person and work. Most books on the subject that I have seen put forward this view. It is very useful in the presentation of the Gospel.

The Tabernacle as a type of the believer:

Others hold that the Tabernacle is a type of the believer, as the dwelling place of God. This view puts forward the idea that the court represents the believer's body, the Holy Place represents the believer's soul, and the Holy of Holies, represents the believer's spirit.

The Tabernacle as a type of heaven:

Others hold the view that the Tabernacle, according to the words of Hebrews ch. 9;23& 24, however the ninth chapter of Hebrews speaks more of heavenly things, rather than heaven itself. It is our intention to present the Tabernacle as a type of the Church, the House of God, the assembly

in the wilderness, though in many of the details we shall see the glory of Christ's finished work, as well as the glory of His person, which glories are both human and divine.

The Tabernacle as a type of the church, God's House:

In introducing His desires regarding the Tabernacle, God said, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them", this clearly shows the purpose of the Tabernacle, it was to be the dwelling place of God, He wished to dwell in the midst of His people.

What is the house of God today?

Paul tells us that it is the "Assembly of the living God" (1Tim.3:15), whose house are we, (Heb 3:6). "Ye also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit", (Eph. 2: 22). "Ye are the temple of God ...the Spirit of God dwells in you", (1Cor. 3: 16, & 17). There are other references, but these are sufficient to prove our point.

The tabernacle was in the wilderness, and for the wilderness, because once they reached the Promised Land, and the kingdom

was established, the temple, (which represents the eternal, the permanent idea,) was built.

The wilderness is where we are now. It is what the death of Christ makes the world for the believer. Once sheltered by the blood of the Passover Lamb; the children of Israel were saved from the judgment due to them because of their sins, but they were not saved from the bondage and slavery of Egypt until they crossed the Red Sea. Both are types of the death of Christ, the Passover delivering from sin's guilt, the Red Sea from its power, and dominion over us.

Once they crossed the Red Sea, there was only wilderness, harsh, hot dry, and barren. Never again would they enjoy the leeks, garlic, melons etc. of Egypt, the Red Sea cut them off from that forever. (Galatians. 6:14) Nor would they ever again hear the shout of the slave driver, or feel the sting and pain of his whip.

The Tabernacle was portable:

The tabernacle was made portable, so that it could be quickly dismantled,

then quickly re-erected in another place. This teaches us that while ever the Church is here, it will not be static; we are following the path of the will of God that has been trodden before us by the Son of God.

Unchanging:

Though the situation of the Tabernacle changed often, the Tabernacle itself did not change. This is important for us to notice, lest we think that the church should change according to its surroundings, or the culture and generation in which it is found.

According to the pattern shown in the mount:

Before the details of the specifications of the Tabernacle were given to Moses, God made the strict command that he was to make everything "After the PATTERN", (Exodus. 25:9). This is repeated twice, Exodus 25:40, ch.26; 30, and is quoted in Heb. 8:5. Neither Moses nor his helpers were to introduce any design, or ideas of their own. This is very important to see.

The principle continues into the New Testament where

we are also responsible to follow the pattern, and the doctrines revealed to the Apostles, (Paul especially), because the light, the pattern, the details of the Assembly constitution and practice, were given to him by revelation. To introduce our own ideas or to change what is clearly taught in the New Testament with regard to doctrine and practice, for mere convenience, or any other reason, is sin. *(To be continued)*



Images of Tabernacle

ANECDOTE:

GIRL RAISED BY PIGS

Few years ago United Press International reported that a 9 year old girl was raised by barnyard pigs in the Chinese province of Liaoning. The girl had been suckled and raised from infancy by a peasant family's pigs because her disabled parents could not care for her.

Like a Chinese version of "Believe It or Not", the report indicated that the severely deprived child was taught to abandon pig like behavior in favour of acting human. Her counselors said that the child had learned to crawl like a pig and imitate other piggish actions. She displayed fluctuating emotions and tended to want to live in solitude.

There is something worse than a 9 – year old child who behaves like a pig. It is a child of God who thinks and acts like an unbeliever!

SPECIAL NOTE:

Praise be to God Almighty who does great and mighty things in and through weak and helpless ones for His glory. It gives us immense joy as we look back to the past 15 years when the Lord graciously helped us to continue to write and post 'Grace & Peace e-periodical' for the benefit of God's people around the world. Many in the past wrote to tell us how they benefited from these humble efforts. We are thankful to the readers for their prayerful cooperation so far.

Recently we could publish a book entitled 'Reflections of a Discerning Christian' which is a collection of articles from this e-periodical revised for the present day reader.

Considering the latest trend of communication, we have been prayerfully considering to change the format of our periodical. However, the html format also will be continued for the time being. Through this periodical as well as the website, gracepeace.net our only aim is to propagate the truth of the word of God that can enlighten, edify and encourage the readers.

Expecting your continued support and prayers.

*Yours in Christ
Nelson Thomas*

CHRIST OUR SYMPATHIZER

 By Nelson Thomas, Mumbai

“Nobody understands me” is a common refrain we often hear. They have their reasons to say so. Physical and mental exhaustion, lack of help and compassion from the near and dear ones, etc. aggravate the feelings of such individuals. Now if we try to give them a word of comfort or an idea to tackle the situation, they will still say, ‘You can’t understand my problem’

Generally speaking, it is a fact that often man fails to understand each other.

Not only he misinterprets the words and deeds of another individual even misjudges the silence of others. As a result, there is no mutual understanding or care. Persistent suspicion and mistrust lead to further disagreement and discord. It is such judgmental attitude the Lord Jesus rebuked in Matthew 7:1

However, in such a painful situation a child of God can take heart; we have a Lord who can sympathize with us. While writing to encourage the depressed Hebrew Christians to continue to hold fast their confession of faith, the writer says, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb.4:15)

Lord Jesus Christ has gone through all that we suffer today, even that which we have never suffered. When the almighty God took the form of a man except for sin, He was underestimated, misunderstood, and even mistreated. The Lord Jesus went through indescribable

and incomprehensible humiliation and sufferings by the hands of man - His own creation. (Psalm.69:20; Hebrews 2:10) That’s exactly the reason why He can identify with us in all the tribulations face, whether inflicted by friends or foes. He is our merciful and faithful High Priest sympathetically pleading on behalf of us before the Father.

What a blessed privilege it is brethren, to remind our souls again that even if nobody understands us perfectly, we have a kind, compassionate Lord who is so close to us, and representing us in the presence of God. (1John.2:1, 2) Not only He knows our condition and needs; He can carry us through.

Just before His departure, the Lord Jesus told His disciples, “Because I live, you will also live.” Jn.14:19c. The triumphant resurrection of our Lord Jesus and His subsequent ascension to the right hand of the Father not only guarantees our life beyond the grave but also sustains us during our earthly life. Not only Christ suffered to procure our salvation, He lives forever to secure our salvation. Apostle Paul elaborates it further, “For if when we were enemies we

were reconciled to God by the *death of His Son*, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by *His life*.” Rom.5:10.

So beloved, rejoice, our Lord lives to empathize and help. He can save us to the uttermost. Go to Him at any time to receive mercy and obtain much grace. (Hebrews 4:16; 7:25) Remember, the root cause of our depression and worry is not how others treat us, but how reluctant we are to go to this gracious Lord who is ever waiting for us at the throne of grace. As the hymn writer wisely put it,

“*Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry;
Everything to God in prayer!*”

Saints, approach the Lord Jesus who understands all about us and yet lovingly forbears with us. He is still working on us, not to abandon in between but to see the best in and through our life.

SIX STATES OF A CHRISTIAN

- Colossians. 2:6-7

 By M.A.J

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Received Christ V.6 | – <i>Conversion-once for all experience.</i> |
| 2. Walks in Him V.6 | – <i>Continuous experience.</i> |
| 3. Rooted in Him V.7 | – <i>Secret devotional life –sucking the life of Christ.</i> |
| 4. Built up in Him V.7 | – <i>Fellowship one with another-as a brick in a building.</i> |
| 5. Established in the faith V.7 | – <i>Strong in the teaching-Result of constant study of the word.</i> |
| 6. Abounding in thanksgiving V.7 | – <i>Praising God for all things, even the smallest.</i> |

YOUNG MINDS :

DOUBLE LIFE

 By Sajith Samuel

Many people today live a double life! One kind of life before the public and another inside. All are very careful to show themselves as decent and well-mannered in their outward dealings. Even if nothing is inside they wear a mask to show that which is not inside. They conveniently forget that God looks not to the outward but the inward. 1Samuel 16:7

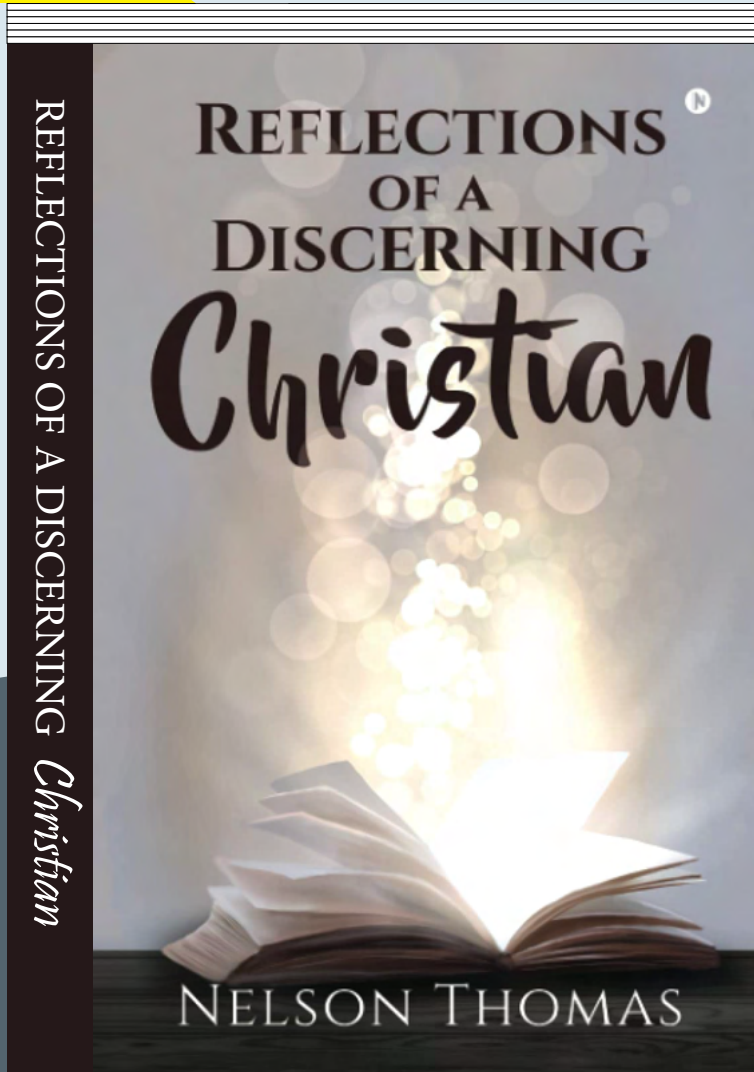
Such show of personality is hypocrisy and God hates it. More than an externally impressive disposition our internal character matters much. It is that which we will be when nobody is around us. Character is the sum of our invisible traits and qualities partially inherited from parents and developed by various lives' situations. It is formed and moulded by numerous influences, circumstances and practices.

As far as a Christian is concerned the Holy Spirit brings about divine character in life as he/she yields to Him. So don't worry about the out-ward expressions, i.e., personality. Be sure that before the penetrating eyes of God our life is pure, holy and acceptable. Yes, the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins. 1John 1:7, 9. Our Lord can transform any character. Praise be to His name.



Book From Grace & Peace

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'REFLECTIONS OF A DISCERNING CHRISTIAN' is compilation of articles appeared in the 'Grace & Peace E-periodical', carefully chosen and revised for today's reader.

It's an effort to highlight certain spiritual issues prevailing among Christians worldwide.

- *What hinders the scripture in spite of the too much preaching programs?*
- *How to respond to unprecedented calamities like the present pandemic?*
- *How to face the culture of falsehood?*

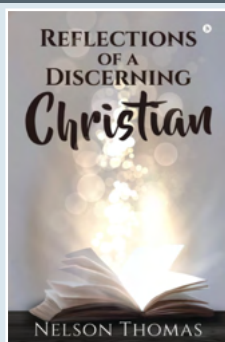
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