

Social Esteem – The Last Sin To Go

The desire for social approbation is one of the less odious self-sins.

It has about it nothing of the offensive quality of self-love or self-righteousness.

We live in a world that is a mixture of good and evil.

Matthew 13:24-30 [NIV] *“Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”*

The good and evil human beings dwell together.

There was at least one period of human history when the good could be counted on the fingers of both hands, not counting the thumbs. [**Genesis 7:1-13**]

The words of our Saviour give us strong reason to believe that the proportion of good and evil will be very similar at the end of the age. [**Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30**]

So corrupt is human nature, so ungodly and rebellious, the true friends of God are unlikely to be accepted by the world.

At times it happens that true Christians may fleetingly be praised for doing something of benefit to society but that is the full extent of acceptance.

John 15:19 [NIV] *“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”*

This is the natural response of the world to true Christians.

2 Timothy 3:12 [NIV] *“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”*

Paul stated this from personal experience.

To be a true Christian requires that we agree to forfeit the approval of the world.

Yet so strong is the human desire to have the approval of other humans, this sin remains within us when other sins have rightly departed.

Mostly we compromise the matter by narrowing the circle of persons whose approval we seek.

For the most part we are merely dead to the opinion of certain sections of the public and have persevered to ourselves other smaller groups whose opinion we value very much indeed.

Even a preacher who earns the reputation of being “fearless” by attacking liberals, catholic idolatry, excessive drinking and immorality but fawns at the feet of their own little group.

He dare not cross the moneyed deacon in his congregation nor express a theological opinion which he knew to be contrary to the mass opinion of the religious group with whom he associates.

When considering plain statements in scripture I cannot believe in the spirituality of any Christian person who keeps an eye open for the approval of others whoever they may be.

The person who is “*after God’s own heart*” [**Acts 13:21-22**] must be dead to the opinion of their friends as well as their enemies.

To reprove one person in order to gain favour of another is no evidence of moral courage.

Yet we see this in the world all the time.

We will never be where we should be in our spiritual lives until we are so devoted to Jesus Christ and His Words, that we ask no other approbation than His.

When we are wholly lost in Him the frantic effort to please other human beings will come to an end. [**2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22**]

The circle of friends we struggle to please will be narrowed to One. [**John 15:13-16**]

Then we will know true freedom from this world, but not a moment before.