

**Devotional Thoughts :: Paying for admittance into heaven -bonar**

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Paying for admittance into heaven

(Horatius Bonar, "Bible Thoughts and Themes")

"He saved us--not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy." Titus 3:5

Ritualism, or externalism, or traditionalism are all different forms of self-righteousness; man's self-invented ways of pleasing or appeasing God, or paying for admittance into heaven. These forms of self-righteousness are a human apparatus for procuring God's pardon. They are the means by which the performer of them hopes to win God's favor--perhaps, also, man's praise--most certainly, his own esteem.

Every act, or performance, or ceremony, which honors self, exalts self, or gives prominence to self--is an accursed thing. It is an abomination in the sight of God--however religious, or sacred, or solemn, or devout, it may seem to man.

It is to self-righteousness in some form or other, that man is always tending. Man attempts to make up for this badness, or to cover it over, by works, and devotions, and ceremonies. All this is pure self-righteousness.

The religion of self-righteousness in our day consists of works, feelings, fancies, music, rites, festivals, fasts, gestures, postures, garments. It is something which gratifies self; which pleases the natural man; which makes a man think well of himself; which gives a man something to do or to feel in order to earn pardon and merit heaven. Pride, religious pride, is at the root. Ritualism is man's expression of rejection of Christ. It was self-righteous religion which crucified the Son of God. All human rites and ceremonies are man's ways of getting rid of Christ. What can all these things do? Can they save?

Can religious postures save?

Can religious garments save?

Can religious candles save?

Can religious music save?

Can religious architecture save?

Can religious cathedrals save?

No! They lead away from Jesus! They make void the cross, and trample on His blood!

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