

**FIRST WORDS**  
**TO**  
**YOUNG CHRISTIANS**

by

Robert Boyd

THE MOODY PRESS      CHICAGO

**CHAPTER TEN -**  
**THE SPIRITUAL MIND**

A SPIRITUAL mind enjoys life and peace. It lives as seeing always the invisible GOD. The tendency of a carnal mind is to gross materialism. It seeks to live far away from GOD; separates between Him and His gifts and even between Him and His works. Hence men of carnal minds, instead of meeting GOD and holding communion with Him in nature and providence, love to speak of GOD as having passed over everything to fixed and unchangeable laws. They speak as if GOD were no longer absolute, but had become the slave of certain laws, which so control all things that it is vain to expect GOD's personal ministry in our every-day wants and wishes. They thus make prayer a vain thing, and mock at the idea of a special providence in the affairs of men. Such would like to exclude GOD from His own universe; but the Lord reigns, and therefore the righteous rejoice!

The Bible tells us that GOD's government over the world is minute and personal. GOD Himself rules, not mere agents and laws. A sparrow falling by the skill of a hunter might seem a very chance event, but our Lord tells us that even there the divine direction is at work. GOD makes use of laws and agents, but He is always through them, in them, and above them, by His own personal presence.

This truth lies at the very foundation of all religious worship. To feel that GOD is about my path, and about my bed, and looking upon, and taking an interest in all my ways, brings Him very near. It leads to an acknowledgment of Him in all that we do. It inspires the soul with a wish to carry all our wants, our cares and our troubles to Him as our best Friend. It strengthens our faith, and kindles our love into a mighty flame. It enables us to talk with GOD face to face as Moses did of old. We feel that He is at work, not merely among the stars, but upon our hearts; that He is not only attending to the revolution of mighty worlds, but also to the smallest matter that concerns our well-being. In short, that GOD is here now, never absent from us for a moment, and a very present help in time of trouble.

How noble and glorious is a life thus lived in GOD! And there are multitudes of such lives. In obscurity and retirement, beneath the shadow of the humblest dwelling, utterly unknown to fame and not caring to be known, they find their all in GOD. In poverty, in adversity, amid the surging billows of outward troubles, their calm trust in GOD never wavers. Their hearts beat with a

quicker throb at the mention of the name of JESUS, and rather than desert His cause they would face death in its worst forms. Their warm love to souls is never chilled by the cold atmosphere of selfishness that surrounds them; but, in spite of injury and insult, of misconception and scorn, they can return good for evil, and pray for those who despitefully use them.

The possession of a spiritual mind is one of the highest proofs of a renewed heart.

A man of a poetic mind and of a cultivated taste may take great delight in GOD's works, and yet be far from GOD Himself. The rush of the mighty waterfall, the lofty overhanging cliff, the sunlit cloud and the star-bespangled heavens, may thrill him with joy, and yet GOD not be in his thoughts. He may utter many sentimental expressions about the greatness and goodness of GOD, and yet sin be loved as well as ever, and holiness hated as much as ever.

But if asked how may we know when the sanctifying grace of GOD is operating in the heart, we could not point to a better evidence than the mind being

### **FIXED ON HEAVENLY THINGS.**

Where the treasure is there will the heart be also. GOD is the treasury of the real Christian, and Heaven is the place where He is most perfectly enjoyed, and to have the affections set upon Heaven is proof of a truly spiritual mind. Knowledge the most extensive, learning the most profound, gifts the most remarkable, a hand ever liberal, and a tongue ever voluble in the cause of CHRIST, may all fail to prove that the heart is right with GOD; but a heart ever soaring heavenward is an evidence that none can doubt.

Take a Christian of the very weakest attainments; one whose ignorance exposes him to the contempt of the learned; one whose intellect may be so weak that he can with difficulty follow a logical argument to its close; and whose stammering tongue refuses to give expression to the warmer emotions of the heart; yet his affections repose in GOD. He has chosen Him as his portion, and his longing for holiness finds expression in the cry: "**O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest!**" He looks upon that day as lost in which he has not had a refreshing view of the love of JESUS, and of his heavenly home.

What are wealth and fame and all that ambition craves, compared to the possession of such a state of mind as this? How refreshing and profitable is the conversation of such a Christian! He comes from converse with GOD, fragrant with the breath of Heaven.

He pours out spiritual treasures. His words, his looks, his tones, all tell us that he has been drinking of the river of life, and feasting on angels' food. If he is thought to be greatly honored who lives in earthly courts, in daily converse with earthly kings, how much more is he honored who is the favorite of the KING of kings. As the greatest mountains are those whose summits reach nearest heaven, so he is

### **THE GREATEST MAN IN GODS SIGHT**

who is found oftenest bathing his soul in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

We will be happy just in proportion as we have this spiritual mind.

The Bible everywhere speaks of the life of true Christians as being a happy one. "**Joy unspeakable and full of glory**" and "**Peace which passeth all understanding**" are terms in which it is spoken of.

The early Christians, amid the heaviest trials, had a joy which was the very symbol of Heaven itself. They stood steadfastly bearing their testimony for the truth, through long years of suffering, their faith growing stronger and grander till their last hour on earth; their examples shining down upon us through all the thick darkness of intervening ages. The reason is that they lived constantly as seeing Him who is invisible.

As the most cold and frozen countries are those that are the farthest from the direct rays of the sun, so the reason why we have so many cold professors of the truth now is that they live so far from GOD.

If we would only collect our thoughts that are often taken up with vanities, if we would only put the curb of restraint upon our wandering imaginations, and bend all our energies to the study of spiritual things, we might (as it were) live in the very suburbs of Heaven.

David says the light of GOD's countenance more gladdens the heart than corn and wine, and therefore he who lives most in the radiance of that countenance will be the most happy.

Many speak as if their want of peace and joy was their misfortune, rather than their sin. But this is a mistake. The Gospel is good news, glad tidings for all people; and if we are not made happy by it, it must be because we have not believed it; and unbelief is, in GOD's sight, a sin worthy of eternal condemnation. GOD does not communicate joy to the soul without the exercise of its powers, any more than He gives us food for our bodies without exercise. If a man were to refuse to plough, and sow, and work, he would be unreasonable to expect a crop; so it is in the exercise of faith that joy comes to the soul.

Lift your thoughts on high! Fix your affections on Heaven! The thought of a Saviour's love has made thousands welcome the flames of martyrdom, and made them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, that they might obtain an enduring inheritance; it can give you like blessedness.

A spiritual mind is the best preservative against temptations to sin.

### **SATAN'S HARVEST TIME**

is when the Christian's mind is in a carnal, worldly frame. Then he employs all his allurements, and shoots forth his fiery darts, as it was when David was upon his house-top, indolently wasting time and neglecting duty, that the temptation was presented to his mind that produced such fearful results; so every Christian knows that a heavenly frame of mind makes sin appear to them exceedingly sinful. They can then say to every suggestion of the enemy: "**Get thee behind me, Satan.**" A man employed in mighty affairs, upon which life and death depend, has no inclination to turn aside to the trifling amusements of children; and so with those who are absorbed with the momentous concerns of eternity.

Besides, such a man has a deeper view of the evil of sin than others.

He has such an overwhelming view of its God-dishonoring nature, such a conception of the vanity of the world, and such an humbling sight of his own natural depravity, that temptations are robbed of their power over him. "**In vain**," says Solomon, "**is the snare spread in the sight of any bird**"; and so it is nearly in vain for Satan to spread his net when the soul sees its danger. Hence he is said to darken the mind, and to blind the eyes of his victims, and so take them captive at his will.

It is when men have allowed the enemy thus to blind them that they make such foolish bargains as to prefer their own will to CHRIST's, sin to holiness, hell to heaven.

And if we were employed in feeding on the heavenly manna, and tasting the delights of heavenly things, sin would be so bitter to our taste that we would turn away from it with unutterable loathing.

Had Satan come to tempt Peter to deny his Master when he was on the mount of Transfiguration, he would have tempted him in vain; but when he found him

### **OUT OF THE PATH OF DUTY**

in worldly company, he succeeded. The children of Israel in the valley ate, and drank, and rose up to dance before their idol; but Moses, who had just come down from conversing with GOD, had no such wish, but on the contrary his very soul loathed their unholy proceedings. So, my reader, if you wish to resist the devil, so that he may flee from you, "**set your affection on things above.**"

The cultivation of a spiritual mind gives new life and vigor to every duty.

It is high time that Christians were heartily ashamed of their cold-heartedness in CHRIST's service. They profess to believe the most sublime truths, and yet they talk of them often with frozen lips and cold hearts. They profess to pray and sing the praises of GOD, often with an apathy that dwindles down into heartless forms.

Now, how are we to get out of this cold and heartless state? What will give new power to our prayers, and make our songs like those of the angels above?

I answer, cultivating a mind that lives in GOD's own immediate presence.

Heavenly-minded Christians are lively and joyful Christians. It is only when we look at heavenly things from a great distance, and through the thick clouds of worldly-mindedness, that we become dull and dead; but when we

### **LIVE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LIVING GOD,**

what a power and dignity there is about us! If such a man be a minister, how heavenly and

spiritual are his sermons! If a private member of the church, his prayers, his conversation, his exhortations are like the distant echoes of the transporting strains that fill the courts of heaven.

After a man has set his affection on heaven, he soon begins to emit so many of heaven's rays, that people say:

**"Surely that man has been with GOD on the holy mount."**

For want of such heavenly-mindedness, many a professor is like a lamp not lighted, and their duties like sacrifices without fire. But when we get a live coal from off the heavenly altar, how freely do our sacrifices burn! And when we light our lamps at the flame of GOD's love, they shed a brilliant radiance all around. O let us lift our hearts to heavenly things! Let us gaze with the eye of faith upon the living SAVIOUR, behold His beauty, His glory, His excellency, and soon the fire of divine love will consume the dross in our hearts, and the fire thus kindled will not be strange fire! Zeal thus excited will be lasting zeal. While some, like Baal's priests, will be ready to cut themselves because their sacrifices will not burn, the truly spiritually-minded man will ascend in a chariot of devotion to heaven. Such a Christian is profitable to all around him. He is as salt to the earth, a light in the midst of surrounding darkness.

While the worldly man will talk of nothing but the world, while the scholar will talk of his learning, and the self-righteous man of his good deeds, he talks of the things that are eternal; and his words pierce and melt, and often transform, the heart of them that hear them. His conversation is like the box of precious ointment that the woman poured upon the head of CHRIST; it fills the whole house with a heavenly odor. Go to that man's house, sit at his table, and your soul is feasted with the heavenly manna. Travel with him by the way, and he will try to direct and quicken you on your journey to Heaven.

He will try to make you rich in faith, and an heir of eternal glory. If you wrong such a man, he can forgive you as he himself has been forgiven. If men invoke curses on his head, he prays for blessings on them. This is the man of the right stamp, and the world is better for him. Like Caleb and Joshua, he has gone to the heavenly country, and brought in a bunch of the heavenly fruit to whet our appetite for more. **"Happy is the people whose God is thus the Lord."**

A spiritual mind is the best support amid the sorrows and the afflictions of life.

Many are the modes adopted for meeting those trials to which all are subjected. Some struggle under them, and render themselves and all around them miserable by pouring forth their unavailing complaints. Others sit down with a stoical indifference, submitting to the lashes of a something they call Fate. Others, leaning upon a false philosophy, try to find comfort for themselves in the utterance of the poor excuse that, seeing we can't help it, we must just submit. Of all such comforts it may be said, as of Job's friends: **"Miserable comforters are ye all."**

When trouble comes to the spiritually-minded man, he has far other comforts. When distress and sufferings rob him of all outward comfort, JESUS comes into his soul and says: **"Peace be unto you!"** When Paul and Silas were thrust into the inner prison, their bodies plowed by scourges and their feet made fast in the stocks,

## THEIR UNFETTERED SOULS SOARED TO HEAVEN

in a song of praise. None could put a lock and key upon their affections. So the martyrs have often enjoyed that peace in the midst of the flames, which their persecutors could not find on a bed of down.

Thus it was that Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went, but looking for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is GOD. It was thus that Moses esteemed the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he had respect to the recompense of the reward. It was thus that others were "**tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.**"

When we think for a moment of the glorious privileges that are the Christian's portion, not a murmuring word should ever proceed from our lips. Every moment under the special care of that loving FATHER, for whose power nothing is too vast, and for whose inspection nothing is too minute; enabled by the eye of faith to look full on His brightness, and to commune with Him face to face; the treasures of GOD's precious promises pouring their untold riches into his soul, and affording him an unperishable source of delight; his name recorded in the Lamb's book of life, his future home a house not made with hands, and a crown of glory awaiting his coming - why should he not be a happy man? His SAVIOUR has ransomed him by His obedience unto death, the death of the cross, and declared his salvation a finished work.

It is evident that a man who lives and walks under the influence of such truths as these, has a cordial for affliction and

## A BALM FOR SORROW

which others cannot possibly possess.

What though a whole shower of afflictions may fall upon him, like the stones upon the head of Stephen, if like him he can see, from the opening heavens, the sympathizing eye of his SAVIOUR fixed upon him! What though he may be doomed to solitude, like John in Patmos, if like him he can only hear the voice of his Lord speaking comfort and cheer! What though he may be put into the fiery furnace of affliction, like the three Hebrews, if as with them the Son of GOD walks with him in the fiery trial! What though like Paul he may have a thorn in the flesh, if like him he can only hear his Lord say: "**My grace is sufficient for thee!**"

What though like Peter, Satan may desire to have him that he might sift him as wheat, if like him he has the Lord's assurance: "**I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not!**"

~ end of chapter 10 ~