

Man's thoughts and God's thoughts

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' Isaiah 55:8–9

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Hebrews 10:1–18

There is an idea in the mind of many of you that the plan of just trusting in Christ, and being pardoned on the spot, is too simple to be safe. You want a plan which involves a host of Latin and Greek and all kinds of thing; you want a long palaver of baptism, confirmation, confession, and I know not what; but the gospel is, 'Trust Jesus, and live.' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' It is too simple, you think, to be safe. Now, it is a well-known fact that the simplest remedies are the most potent and safe; and certainly, the simplest rules in mechanics are just those upon which the greatest engineers erect their most wonderful constructions. The moment you get to complexity you get into a snarl, and are on the brink of weakness. Simplicity, how solid it is! See the old-fashioned plan of putting a plank across the village brook—that was the old way of making a bridge. Well, then, somebody came in and invented an arch—a grand invention, certainly, but not in all cases suitable. The Menai tubular bridge is nothing more than the old plan of a plank thrown across the brook, and more and more great engineers revert to simplicities. When man grows wisest, he comes back to where he was when he started. I suppose that a swan sailing across a lake gave to the navigator the best possible model of a vessel, to which navigation will always have to keep close if it would keep close to the true and beautiful. Now, as in nature simplicity is strength, so is it certainly in grace. Trust Christ and live!

FOR MEDITATION: Pride makes us reluctant to accept a salvation which affords us no personal credit or glory (2 Kings 5:9–14). Are you rejecting God's free gift of forgiveness in Christ and complicating your life with wasted efforts, which will never result in a satisfactory conclusion (Isaiah 55:1–2)?

Work

'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' John 9:4

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: 1 Peter 4:7–11

There are ten thousand actions good in themselves, which it might not be right for me to choose as my vocation in life. I know a great many persons who think it is their business to preach, but who had much better make it their business to hear for a little while longer. We know some who think it is their business to take the headship of a class, but who might be amazingly useful by giving away some tracts, or by taking a seat in a class themselves for a little while. The fact is, that we are not to pick and choose the path of Christian service which we are to walk in, but we are to do the work of him that sent us; and our object should be, as there is so much work to be done, to find out what part of the work the Master would have us to do. Our prayer should be, 'Show me what thou wouldst have me to do'—have *me* to do in particular; not what is generally right, but what is particularly right for me to do. My servant might, perhaps, think it a very proper thing for her to arrange my papers for me in my study, but I should feel but a very slender amount of gratitude to her. If, however, she will have a cup of coffee ready for me early in the morning, when I have to go out to a distant country town to preach, I shall be much more likely to appreciate her services. So, some friends think, 'How I could get on if I were in such-and-such a position, if I were made a deacon, if I were elevated to such a post.' Go your way, and work as your Master would have you. You will do better where he puts you than you will where you put yourself. You are no servant, indeed, at all, when you pick and choose your service.

FOR MEDITATION: No Christian should try to be a square peg in a round hole. God must decide who does what and who goes where (Mark 10:37, 40). But no Christian is to be a peg without a hole. Each has received a gift and should be using it (1 Peter 4:10).