

BALAAM'S ASS

Or

A Sinner's Thoughts (Part Five)

by

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“And God opened the mouth of the ass,
and it spake to Balaam.”

(cf. Num. 22:28)

- He that loves God is aflame [with this love] without displaying it; he is joyous without laughter and contrite in the depths of his soul.
- The love that Christ taught us is different than so-called philanthropy. This is why [secular] philanthropists do not taste of Christ's love, which is “the water that springs up unto life everlasting.” The acts of philanthropy that men do today are a social obligation. Such philanthropists are not Christians.
- He that loves Christ and His Gospel loves that which is most worthy of our love. In Christ we see that which is the most worthwhile of all things: love, humility, compassion, meekness, spiritual affliction, and spiritual joy — the last two especially are sweet when they are experienced in Christ's name.
- “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). You want to give us rest!? We don't want even to *hear* of this. We don't want rest. We want to be heavy laden — with our passions, our enmities, our wars, and our concerns over our ambitions and the flesh; we want to be filthy with blood, revolvers, artillery, and bombs. What will become of us if we don't have these things, O Lord our Peacemaker? How will we be able to

¹Selections translated by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston from the periodical *Kivotós* (in Greek), Athens, November 1952, pp. 421–422.

live in rest? How will we be able to fill our empty selves, since for us life means occupying ourselves with these things alone? You give us peace, but this peace is death for us, since it is the death of our beloved passions! If You had said: “I will weigh you down with more burdens than you already have, ones with which you are as yet unfamiliar, and I will enrich your souls with many other such ‘riches,’ so that you might never find peace,” then we would have followed You and accepted You as our God. We want gods who lay burdens on us; gods who are vengeful like Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; and liars like Mercury and the other gods of the pagans.² We want to live in evil, because it is something living and powerful.

“Yea come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20) cries John to Him that will come on the clouds at the Second Coming. But you have to be a saint and righteous — indeed, you have to be the Apostle John in order to rejoice that Christ is coming and to be awaiting Him. In contrast, we cry, “Don’t come, Lord Jesus!” because we are sinners and fear that the wrath of God will come upon us.

When the nuclear bombs fell [on Japan], all these thoughts came to me. As soon as people heard the report of these dreadful weapons, fear seized every heart. Blessed are they, therefore, who are prepared at every moment! But, alas! Who is prepared like John, the holiest of the saints? All of us fear lest Christ come like a thief in the night (Luke 21; I Thess. 5:2).



²Kontoglou uses the Greek names for the gods of the pagans.