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John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

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9-28-1967

To: Jay Smith

John Allen Chalk

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P.

September 28, 1967

Mr. Jay Smith  
Twentieth Century Christian  
2814 Granny White  
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Jay:

It was a real pleasure being with you last week in Benton, Kentucky. You made a great impression on the young people from the remarks I heard. I was personally pleased not only with the opportunity of appearing on the same platform during the question and answer period, but also getting to hear the sermon you presented that morning. It was an extremely good one that meant a great deal to me as well as to the young people.

I wanted to ask about one statement made during the sermon right that day but circumstances did not allow us to be together alone. I understood you to say, and so did a college young lady who was there and came to me asking about it in a very good spirit, that "first we surrender ourselves and second we transform ourselves." You were preaching, of course, on Romans 12:1-2. At the time the statement struck me and therefore, the reason I wanted to question you about it. I thought it was an excellent point that "first we surrender ourselves" but I could not agree that "second we transform ourselves." According to the tense of the verb "be ye transformed", as well as the meaning of the verb especially as discussed by Godet in his commentary, suggests that the transformation is not something self induced but rather that which arises from within the heart of the surrendered individual by the power of God. This would have implications both in regeneration as well as sanctification. It is my understanding that when we surrender, that is "obey the gospel," God's power is loosed in our lives and the cleansing blood of Jesus brings us freedom from sin and the new life of Christ. Therefore, would it not be more Biblically correct to say "first we surrender ourselves and second God transforms us." I hope this is not belaboring a small point. If you have any reaction that will help me come to a better understanding, I will appreciate hearing from you. If you agree with the emphasis I have just attempted to explain, then you need not even reply.

Mr. Jay Smith  
September 28, 1967  
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Again, it was a pleasure being with you; I did very definitely and sincerely appreciate the lesson you presented.

Have you been able to look through the material I sent for Pulpit Workshop? If so, what are your reactions to it? Is this the kind of material you expected or were you looking for something of a different nature? If you have anything to comment on that, I will look forward to hearing from you. I send you my best wishes for all the good work you are doing.

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk  
Radio Speaker

JAC:dw

P.S. You might enjoy reading both the Phillips and Today's English Versions' translations of Romans 12:2 as well as the New English Bible.