

the
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Prejudice
and Its
Remedy

Are Shortcuts Safe? \ Are We Losing Our Children to the World?



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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
 —Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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Salting the Oats

By D. Sureshkumar

Four men can lead a horse to water, but 400 men cannot make that horse to drink even a drop of it." True! But you can salt the oats. Salting the oats means to create thirst. Salt is a kind of catalyst that causes thirst.

Most people consume far less water than is recommended for good health. Worse yet, many drink caffeinated beverages such as coffee and soda pop. These drinks can cause the body to lose water, making proper hydration even more difficult to attain. What one needs is to develop a desire for water—the water of life as well! Water is life.

Jesus refers to His children by various names such as sheep, brethren, little ones, and so forth. When He gives us the name "salt," He reminds us that we have the opportunity and responsibility to be an influence in the world. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ highlights some qualities that ought to be present in every citizen of His kingdom. When we possess these characteristics, we will exert a positive influence and will make a difference in the world around us.

Jesus told His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). In the Old Testament, the prophets were the salt of the land of Canaan, and then in the New Testament the apostles were the salt of the earth. A mere handful of them had a tremendous impact. The love of Christ manifested in their unselfish ministry was more effective

in reforming the evildoer than was the sword or the court of justice. When we consider the effect that the apostles had on our world, they indeed turned it upside down (Acts 17:6). They were the salt of the earth.

Salt is a sustainer of other life, too. This is why seawater will support many more organisms than fresh water. As a preservative, it retards spoilage. It is also a splendid condiment, adding zest and savor to our food.

Salt in the Scriptures is symbolic of a binding covenant (Leviticus 2:13), a healing and cleansing aid (2 Kings 2:20, 21), a stimulant to the appetite (Job 6:6), a preventive of decay (Luke 14:34, 35), a promoter of peace (Mark 9:50), a stimulant to our testimony (Matthew 5:13), and an evidence of grace (Colossians 4:6). We need to be about the business of purifying, preserving, penetrating, pleasing, and promoting so that the Lord can use our life and our testimony for His glory.

Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon are both examples of individuals providing divine salt amidst a decaying society. Although their ministries did not prevent the eventual fall of those nations, they left the people there without excuse.

By taking one sip of soup or one bite of dinner we immediately know whether or not it has been salted. The question is, when people "sample" us, do they sense the taste of Christ? There is a thirst that salt causes. If we are not affecting the world, the world is affecting us. Are we exporting or are we importing? Are there greater influences coming into the church than are going out from it? If we are not salting the world, what does that mean? The

world is rotting us! Salt is a remedy for unsavory food, but there is no remedy for unsavory salt.

"The followers of Christ are represented by Him as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Without the saving influence of Christians, the world would perish in its own corruption. Look upon the class of professed Christians described, who are careless of their dress and person, and loose in business transactions. Think you if our Saviour were upon earth He would point to them as the salt of the earth and the light of the world? No, never. True Christians are elevated in their conversation; and while they believe it to be a sin to condescend to foolish flattery, they are courteous, kind, and benevolent. Their words are those of sincerity and truth. They are faithful in their dealings with their brethren and with the world."¹

Christ's followers should reflect the light of heaven to the world; their lifework is to direct the minds of sinners to God. This is what salting the oats means. The Christian's life should awaken in the heart of worldlings high and elevated views of the purity of the Christian religion. This is what creates a thirst for Christ. This will make His believers the salt of the earth, the saving power in our world.

"Christ is the light, the life, the holiness, the sanctification, of all who believe, and His light is to be received and imparted in all good works. In many different ways His grace is also acting as the salt of the earth; whithersoever this salt finds its way, to homes or communities, it becomes a preserving power to save all that is good, and to destroy all that is evil. True religion is the light of the world, the salt of the earth."² ❧

References

¹ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 87.

² *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 124.



Heaven-Born Love



By M. Barbu

Through the power of His Word, God created the universe and called into existence a wonderful kingdom of diversely colored and nicely smelling plants, as well as the fish, fowls, and animals. After that He molded out of dust—in an entirely different way—the first human being and gave him life from His own life. Man was created out of love, according to the image and likeness of the Creator. God created man, and the angels and countless worlds sang and rejoiced as an expression of their thankfulness for the love of our Lord Jesus. God attracts us towards Him every moment, proving His interest and His love through the countless blessings He offers to His children, “for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45).

“The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator’s love. . . .

“‘God is love’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire

of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy.”¹

God takes care of every created being

“O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. . . . These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.” (Psalm 104:24, 27).

“The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:15, 16).

No person can explain the existence of matter or the origin of energy. No one knows the secrets of motion, the order of vegetable or animal life, the processes of human thought, the intelligence, attention or memory, the origin of speech or the mysteries of

will power. The psalmist declared, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

Love in Christ's incarnation

Although we are impressed by the perfection of everything created by God, by the wonderful laws governing the vegetable and animal kingdom, or those which keep the worlds in space, we see God in Christ. Although He was the Creator Himself, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). This humiliation will be the object of the study of angels and the study of the saved throughout all eternity. We are amazed when we think that He was born in a manger. God, the Creator of all worlds, came to earth to be born like any other child. He spent His childhood in Nazareth, a place known for the wickedness of its inhabitants. He chose to be born in a poor family, working hard from early childhood to make a living.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

The divine Son became flesh. The Almighty manifested Himself on earth as a helpless child of humans. Just think of this: He had to be fed! He couldn't feed Himself, He had to have His clothes changed, because He couldn't do that by Himself; He had to be helped to walk, because He couldn't walk alone. It's stunning! Through contrast we can understand why God condescended so much, in order that He might lift us up in an indescribable measure. "For [God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Through the incarnation of Christ, God condemned sin (Romans 8:3) in the very bulwark it was using: He condemned it in human nature, in order that by this means

God condescended so much, in order that He might lift us up in an indescribable measure.

something wonderful and unachievable otherwise would be possible for us now: The commandment of the Law trespassed by us in human nature would be now fulfilled by us. How? Still present in human nature, but being led by other life principles, other "instincts"! Those of the Holy Spirit! In body Christ was made sin for us, in order that we might be made (almost incredible!!!) the righteousness of God in Him. And that while we are still in the body!

"God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God."²

"[Taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men]" "was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing."³ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"[Jesus] endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God."⁴

"[The Son of God] was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life

free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man."⁵

"[Jesus] life was one of constant self-sacrifice. He had no home in this world except as the kindness of friends provided for Him as a wayfarer. He came to live in our behalf the life of the poorest and to walk and work among the needy and the suffering. Unrecognized and unhonored, He walked in and out among the people for whom He had done so much. He was always patient and cheerful, and the afflicted hailed Him as a messenger of life and peace. He saw the needs of men and women, children and youth, and to all He gave the invitation, 'Come unto Me.'⁶

Death on the cross: The supreme love

Jesus had often told the disciples about His sufferings and death, but their minds were blinded and could not understand. They were too familiarized with hopes long cherished about a temporal kingdom. Therefore the temptation was too great for them—the suffering of seeing the "king" crucified was too painful for them. They were unprepared for the hour of their supreme trial. As some of them were invited to abide with Him during the last visit in the garden of Gethsemane,

Behold [Christ] contemplating the price to be paid for the human soul."

they fell asleep. He was now praying for Himself.

"Behold [Christ] contemplating the price to be paid for the human soul. In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God. The chilling dew of night falls upon His prostrate form, but He heeds it not. From His pale lips comes the bitter cry, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' Yet even now He adds, 'Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"⁷

"[The world's Redeemer] accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin."⁸

His face was changed by anguish. The bloodstains had distorted Him. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

We are entreated by the inspired word to meditate daily at least for one hour on the life of Christ, especially the closing scenes. This very life—the life of Christ—is the only way through

which we can be saved from sin. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Christ was punished as we should have been punished, in order that through His wounds we might be able to regain the Paradise lost.

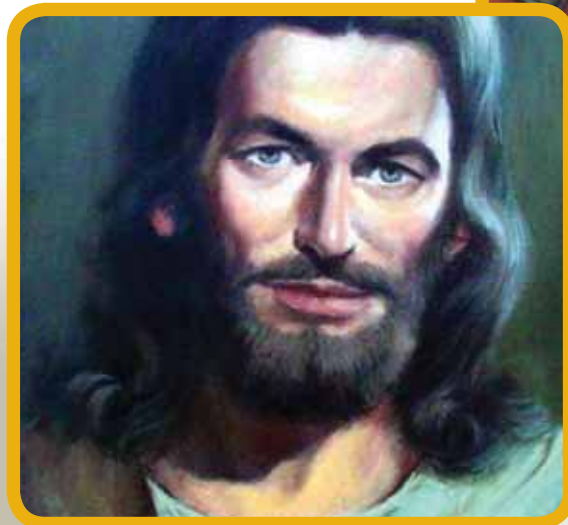
"In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help."⁹

"Christ has shown that His love was stronger than death. He was accomplishing man's salvation; and although He had the most fearful

conflict with the powers of darkness, yet, amid it all, His love grew stronger and stronger. He endured the hiding of His Father's countenance, until He was led to exclaim in the bitterness of His soul: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul struggle, the blessed words were uttered which seemed to resound through creation: 'It is finished.'"¹⁰

Love shining from the sanctuary

After the saddest Sabbath in the life of the disciples, they were troubled again by the news circulating regarding His disappearing from Joseph's tomb. Mary Magdalene had gone to anoint the dead body. As she came to the tomb, she saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance and the guard was no longer there. The disciples entered the tomb too, and they also noticed it was empty. They were amazed, but they went fearfully home. Nonetheless, in the midst of her tears, this woman talked to the angels. Her desire to find out the fate of the disappeared body was generously rewarded. She was the first being unto whom the Lord revealed Himself after the resurrection. When she discovered in the coming Stranger her Saviour, she wanted to grasp His feet and to worship Him, yet "Jesus saith unto



her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

"Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life. The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son."¹¹

Christ revealed Himself to the disciples several times over the course of 40 days, in order to prepare them to receive the Holy Spirit and for their important mission as His ambassadors for a spiritually thirsty world. After the resurrection, at their first meeting, He explained to them that what happened had to happen—that He had to die and be resurrected according to what the prophecies declared about Him. They touched Him and saw that He was alive. Now, He said, "Ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48). After 40 days He climbed slowly, walking together with the disciples,

the Mount of Olives and was lifted up from among them.

From then on, another part of His service in our behalf had begun. While He was beginning the work of High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the Holy Spirit accompanied the apostles with great power in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and unto the ends of the world. He communicated with them, revealing unto them the sufferings which His Church would have to go through until His coming.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

"For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time,

as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary."¹²

An appeal to Christ's church in the final era

The message addressed to the final church represents the last scenes of the time of trial. It reveals a time of judgment. We are now in the last period of the church. The message applies to the believers living in the time of the third angel's message, the last message of grace before the coming of the Lord Jesus.

This is not a message of peace and safety. God's people are represented as being in a position of safety. They are comfortable, imagining that they are in a state of high spiritual knowledge. The message of the true witness finds God's people in a sad deception, but honest in this deception.

As a people, we have the precious light of God's revelation, the proofs of fulfilled prophecies, the experiences of past generations with all their light. There has never been a people more blessed with the riches of the divine truth. But these are not enough. The Lord wants His people, His beloved children, to be sanctified by the truth, in order that the fruit of Christ's righteousness can be revealed in our life. The Lord, in His great mercy, sends us the most serious warnings in order to prepare us to enter the last and the greatest crisis. Do we need these warnings? Are they addressed to us? Are there among us hidden sins,

worldly pleasures and practices which are being cherished? We are in need of Bible humility, of patience, love, and a sacrificing spirit. Sin gains victories in our midst and then we believe that others need to be reprov-



When everything is crushing down, when you come to despair, a single remedy is left: Love! Kiss the hand that is beating you!

Among us “many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing”¹³

“The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety,’ while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease.”¹⁴

Christ reproves and punishes all those whom He loves

Reproof and punishment are very unpleasant means in a relationship based upon subordination. They show that all other less aggressive methods have failed. Keeping in mind the character and wisdom of the One who speaks in this verse, as well as the state of the ones unto whom these words are addressed, we must acknowledge that there is a critical, even desperate situation. When not even love—and here we speak of a godly, infinite love—can find another way than reproof and punishment, we should ponder over it in the most serious manner.

Even more: What point is there in the best intention, even in desperate cases, if these measures taken for correction are not received with love? What can you achieve with the reproved one if he or she does not love you, if he or she rebels against the punishment, if he or she considers that he or she is suffering

without reason, if he or she believes that any other person in the world would have deserved the punishment, except him or her?

I remember here the experience of a brother who was persecuted to the utmost by the former regime in Romania. Those posing the restrictions used to have diabolical methods to destroy not only the body, but the psyche as well. Being thus tortured by the secret police, this brother felt that he would “lose his mind,” that he would become mad. During this time of extreme despair, he remembered a poem he himself had written many years before. In this poem he was talking to the Saviour with the words: “Even if You wouldn’t save me, I would still worship You because You have been the only One to try to save me at all!” The remembrance of this thought—inspired by the Lord Himself—resulted in his deliverance from that desperate circumstance. With a dignity which commended both respect and fear at the same time, he declared to his torturers that he no longer feared anything: “I am sorry I lost for a moment my trust in the One I love and adore. I am here, you can do with my body whatever you please, but my soul is resting in Him.” From that very moment his trial came to an end. He was raised above the actual state, unto the throne of the one he loved. By God’s mercy he was sentenced to prison, he served his term there, and was finally released, remaining strong in the faith.

Love in trials and suffering

“Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God ‘doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men’ (Lamentations 3:33). When He permits trials and afflictions, it is ‘for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness’ (Hebrews 12:10). If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and

hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!”¹⁵

It is an indisputable fact that love is the decisive factor in any relationship, but this is especially true in extreme situations when reproof and punishment become necessary. When everything is crushing down, when you come to despair, a single remedy is left: Love! Kiss the hand that is beating you!

“We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him.”¹⁶

God sees farther than we poor mortals can see. He knows what can be achieved by “suffering.” Even for His mostly beloved Son, who took our place, God did not find means to bring Him unto perfection, except by suffering. He will apply no other methods in our case. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Hebrews 2:10). How did He manage to overcome, when “it pleased the Lord to bruise him” (Isaiah 53:10)?

“By faith [Christ] rested in [His father] whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father’s favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.”¹⁷ Shall we not strive to be victors as well? *✠*

References

¹ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 9, 10.

² *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 419.

³ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 22, 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵ *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 422, 423.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 687.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 693.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 752, 753.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 212.

¹¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 790.

¹² *The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 253.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 233.

¹⁵ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

Lessons From the Preparation of the Soil



Part 4

By Les Gibson

[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

In studying about soil preparation, we are reminded that we have a work to do before the outpouring of the latter rain. This spiritual preparation is likened to soil preparation. And when we dig deeply into the soil, we may find unexpected treasures.

A treasure hunt

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matthew 13:44).

Have you ever led small children on a treasure hunt, where the treasure is a little Bible verse, a promise from God, or a parable they can understand? It makes for a fun, enjoyable "nature-day Sabbath."

In Matthew 13:1–58 we find many such treasures. In the simple parable of

the sower, Christ taught many important truths—truths that even the disciples did not at first understand. As we continue to dig for truth as for hid treasure, we become excited as little children going on a treasure hunt. What we have uncovered in our search, in all our digging for truth, we now submit to you for scrutiny, for evaluation, and for the pure sake of the truth.

The parable of the sower

"[Jesus] spake many things unto [great multitudes] in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns

What makes the good ground good? It's the same dirt all through the field! Think about it!



sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matthew 13:3-8).



"And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow' (Verse 3, New Revised Standard Version).

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Verse 9).

Many times as a child, I heard from an



adult the word "Listen!"

When I grew up and I in turn have children, I often told them to "Listen!" When our children grew up, they in turn have children, and guess what? The same word comes out of their mouth: "Listen!" God is here trying to tell us something! Something so important that Jesus came in person to this planet to tell us this parable, to make sure we got this message!

In 18 Bible verses we see the words "Let him hear," not always about the same subject. So it is in life, when we want others to listen to us.

My dear friends, should we listen? Should we hear what the Spirit says to the church? (See Revelation 2:11.)

About the message

Jesus came to this world to give us a message, the same message He wanted His followers to give, but how can we give a message if we do not understand it?

We are to work as He worked—yet how did He work? Jesus taught in parables about the things in nature. Do we do this? Do we understand the parables that He taught? Do we know what He taught in His parables?

Have you wondered why Jesus taught in parables? The servant of the Lord explains: "In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could

learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were

revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar."¹

Notice, He came "that we might become acquainted with His divine character and life."

Notice, "In Christ's parable teaching, the same principle is seen."

Notice, "The unknown was illustrated by the known."

What lessons did Jesus teach? What was His textbook? Where was His classroom?

In Matthew 13:1-58 we find a field for exploration. The servant of the Lord explains:

"It had been an eventful day in the life of Jesus. Beside the Sea of Galilee He had spoken His first parables, by familiar illustrations again explaining to the people the nature of His kingdom and the manner in which it was to be established. He had likened His own work to that of the sower; the development of His kingdom to the growth of the mustard seed, and the effect of leaven in the measure of meal. The great final separation of the righteous and the wicked He had pictured in the parables of the wheat and tares and the fishing net. The exceeding preciousness of the truths He taught had been illustrated by the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, while in the parable of the householder He taught His disciples how they were to labor as His representatives."²

In His life, death, and resurrection, the Master taught attention to details!

In this study, we will be paying attention to details, some seemingly insignificant details.

Farming techniques and principles were well known in the time of Christ!



“Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon.”³

In Matthew 13:18, 19, Jesus said, “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.” (The seed=the Word of God.)

It is not only the hearing, but also the understanding of what Jesus taught that is so important! How do we understand the parable of the sower?

The importance of the parable

“Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow. . . . He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mark 4:3, 9).

The disciples did not understand. Do we?

The same story is related in Luke 8:5–8. “And [Jesus’] disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?” (Verse 9).

Now, if the disciples did not understand—those men who walked and talked with Jesus daily, who ate of the loaves and fishes with Him and experienced the miracles—if they did not comprehend, how can we?

We’ve been told that if we don’t understand, the devil will catch away the seed (the word of God).

In Mark 4:13, Jesus said, “Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”

We must hear! We must understand! May the Lord help us!

A saving message

To think that this parable is mostly about the sower is to blame Jesus for crop failure! Impossible! Neither is it about the seed, because the seed is the Word of God! That never changes! The results of the sowing are variable. Some yielded 30-fold, some 60-fold, some 100-fold.

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:8, NIV).

“Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools”—and our souls!

If my math is right, 30-fold would be 30 times the initial investment, or a 3,000% increase, 60-fold would likewise be a 6,000% increase, now watch this, 100 times the initial investment would equal a 10,000% increase!

300%–100% (initial investment) = 200%. Congratulations, you just had a twofold increase. If that one sheep could have 30 lambs, that would be $100\% \times 30 = 3,000\%$!

This rate of return is only from the good ground! The other ground is having crop failure!

Why do we call this the parable of the sower? Because we’ve been taught to call it by that name. Well then, what is this parable about? Again, the servant of the Lord explains.

“That with which the parable of the sower chiefly deals is the effect produced on the growth of the seed by the soil into which it is cast. By this parable Christ was virtually saying to His hearers, ‘It is not safe for you to stand as critics of My work, or to indulge disappointment because it does not meet your ideas. The question of greatest importance to you is, **How do you treat My message? Upon your reception**

or rejection of it your eternal destiny depends.”⁴

Brethren and sisters, if my eternal destiny depends upon my reception or rejection of Christ’s Word, then I want to understand it!

What is this parable about? What makes the good ground good? It’s the same dirt all through the field! Think about it! The weeds grow in the same dirt as the grain. Over there where the rocks are, it is still the same dirt. Why the difference, even in the “good ground”? How can I increase the productivity of my good ground? Have we really valued this parable as a learning, teaching tool?

So, what do you think? Should we take a closer look at this parable? After all, this involves your destiny, your salvation. Let us keep this vital topic in our mind, that the soil of our heart may truly be prepared to receive the blessings God has in store for each of us! ☞

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¹ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 17.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 333.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 179.

⁴ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 43, 44.





Prejudice and Its Remedy

By Davi Paes Silva

Prophecy tells us that the whole earth is to be enlightened with the glory of God. John the Revelator “saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory” (Revelation 18:1). This is prophetic truth that cannot be controverted. God says it will happen, and it surely will. His people

must have characters prepared in harmony with the character of Christ in order for Him to be able to entrust them with such “great power.” Yet those in darkness who will become enlightened must be prepared as well. How will they be enlightened if their eyes are tightly shut and their ears stopped up? There is a barrier which is hindering many, and believers must inevitably face this obstacle and deal with it by God’s methods. The barrier is called prejudice.

“Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on [Christ]?” (John 7:48).

edy

Prejudice is, as the name implies, the process of “pre-judging” something. It implies judgment evidence and without experience.

It is defined as “an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason. Any preconceived opinion or feeling, favorable or unfavorable. Disadvantage resulting from some judgment or action of another.”¹

Here are some words related to prejudice: “bias, warp, twist, slant, turn, blind side; preconception, preconceived notion or idea, jaundice, jaundiced eye; prepossession, predisposition, presupposition, predetermination, prejudgment, forejudgment, premature judgment. Partiality, predilection; partisanship, cronyism, favoritism. *Inf.* back scratching, unfairness, one-sidedness, unevenness. Intolerance, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, closed-mindedness, small-mindedness; racism, segregation, Jim Crowism, apartheid, white supremacy or power; color line, color barrier; discrimination, sexism, male chauvinism; super patriotism, jingoism, chauvinism; class consciousness, class hatred, social barrier; xenophobia; anti-Semitism; misogyny; misanthropy.”²

Prejudice is one of the most damaging processes that can occur against

individuals, groups, and even against God and His wonderful truths. Actually, the biggest loser is the one who fosters prejudice against others. It affects social and religious relationships. It blocks its possessors against the truth and even against their own salvation. It is a great hindrance for the work of preaching the gospel, and it manifests itself mainly in larger religious groups against minorities. Prejudice is common between races and nations, and bloody wars have been fought because of prejudice. Prejudice affects our individual life as believers, and it affects the church as a whole and our work of evangelization.

What does the Bible say about prejudice?

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,



“Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service.”

without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

A plant of satanic origin

“Every good principle must be cherished if we would have it thrive in the soul. That which Satan plants in the heart—envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness, and vanity—must be uprooted. If these evil things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul!”³

In the Bible we find many examples of prejudice and its terrible results. One of the worst was manifested by the Jewish people when they rejected Christ as the Messiah and Saviour.

Let us first consider how prejudice hinders us in accepting the gospel and understanding the Bible truths. Some examples:

Paul’s experience

After Christ Himself, the apostle Paul may be considered history’s most brilliant evangelist and minister of God’s Word. His extensive missionary travels under the most difficult circumstances, his suffering in behalf of the gospel, his love for souls are wonderful examples of a true missionary.

Before his conversion on the road to Damascus, Saul showed himself to have been a true slave of prejudice. His work as persecutor of the early Christian church testifies that his



whole life was guided by strong feelings of religious bigotry. For Saul it was a real struggle to acknowledge Christ as the awaited Messiah.

“[Saul] knew that his former prejudice and unbelief had clouded his spiritual perception and had prevented him from discerning in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of prophecy.”⁴

“When, in the midst of his blind error and prejudice, Saul was given a revelation of the Christ whom he was persecuting, he was placed in direct communication with the church, which is the light of the world.”⁵

Peter’s experience

The experience involving the apostle Peter and the conversion of Cornelius—the Roman centurion—gives us precious lessons. This interesting experience is faithfully registered by Luke in Acts 10:9–48. The apostle had this to say: “God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Verse 28).

“How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter’s mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents

He sought to divest the apostle’s mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God’s sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel.”⁶

Prejudice in the early Christian church

Among those who accepted the gospel in the early Christian church, we read that prejudice ran high against the Gentiles. Even the great apostle Peter harbored those sentiments as he conveyed the message to Cornelius.

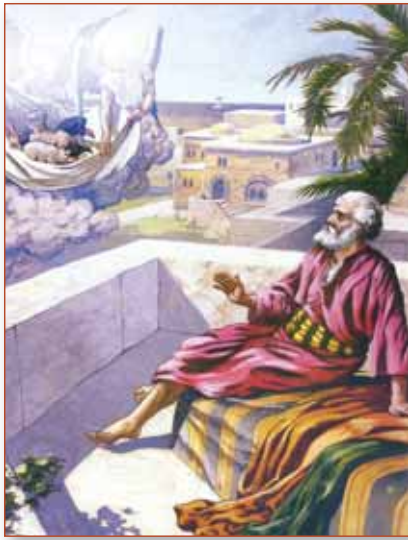
“When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to those assembled, they were surprised and offended. They feared that such a course, which looked to them presumptuous, would have the effect of counteracting his own teaching. When they next saw Peter they met him with severe censure, saying, ‘Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.’

“Peter laid the whole matter before them. He related his experience in regard to the vision and pleaded that it admonished him to observe no longer the ceremonial distinction of circumcision and uncircumcision, nor to look upon the Gentiles as unclean. . . .

“On hearing this account, the brethren were silenced. Convinced that Peter’s course was in direct fulfillment of the plan of God, and that their prejudices and exclusiveness were utterly contrary to the spirit of the gospel, they glorified God, saying, ‘Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.’

“Thus, without controversy, prejudice was broken down, the exclusiveness established by the custom of ages was abandoned, and the way was opened for the gospel to be proclaimed to the Gentiles.”⁷

“When Peter, at a later date, visited Antioch, he won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven. He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism. A number of the Jews ‘dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also



“As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done.”

was carried away with their dissimulation.’ This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division. But Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments. In the presence of the church, Paul inquired of Peter, ‘If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?’ (Galatians 2:13, 14).

“Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment. God also saw that in time to come some would be so deluded as to claim for Peter and his pretended successors the exalted prerogatives that belong to God alone. And this record of the apostle’s weakness was to remain as a proof of his fallibility and of the fact that he stood in no way above the level of the other apostles.

“The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn

warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle. The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council.

“After all Peter’s failures; after his fall and restoration, his long course of service, his intimate acquaintance with Christ, his knowledge of the Saviour’s straightforward practice of right principles; after all the instruction he had received, all the gifts and knowledge and influence he had gained by preaching and teaching the word—is it not strange that he should dissemble and evade the principles of the gospel through fear of man, or in order to gain esteem? Is it not strange that he should waver in his adherence to right? May God give every man a realization of his helplessness, his inability to steer his own vessel straight and safe into the harbor.”^s

Paul and Apollos

In the famous city of Corinth, the church there was also plagued by prejudice. The apostle Paul admonished them:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and

I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:10–13).

“In the early Christian church there were some who refused to recognize either Paul or Apollos, but held that Peter was their leader. They affirmed that Peter had been most intimate with Christ when the Master was upon the earth, while Paul had been a persecutor of the believers. Their views and feelings were bound about by prejudice. They did not show the liberality, the generosity, the tenderness, which reveals that Christ is abiding in the heart.

“There was danger that this party spirit would result in great evil to the Christian church, and Paul was instructed by the Lord to utter words of earnest admonition and solemn protest. Of those who were saying, ‘I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ,’ the apostle inquired, ‘Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?’ ‘Let no man glory in men,’ he pleaded. ‘For all things are yours; whether Paul,



or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s’ (1 Corinthians 1:12, 13; 3:21–23).

“Paul and Apollos were in perfect harmony. The latter was disappointed and grieved because of the dissension

“Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God.”

in the church at Corinth; he took no advantage of the preference shown to himself, nor did he encourage it, but hastily left the field of strife. When Paul afterward urged him to revisit Corinth, he declined and did not again labor there until long afterward when the church had reached a better spiritual state.”⁹

The good example of the Bereans

The Bible gives the following report about the Bereans believers: “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few” (Acts 17:10–12).

“The minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice. They were willing to investigate the truthfulness of the doctrines preached by the apostles. They studied the Bible, not from curiosity, but in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. Daily they searched the inspired records, and as they compared scripture with scripture, heavenly angels were beside them, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts.

“Wherever the truths of the gospel are proclaimed, those who honestly desire to do right are led to a diligent searching of the Scriptures. If, in the closing scenes of this earth’s history,



those to whom testing truths are proclaimed would follow the example of the Bereans, searching the Scriptures daily, and comparing with God’s word the messages brought them, there would today be a large number loyal to the precepts of God’s law, where now there are comparatively few. But when unpopular Bible truths are presented, many refuse to make this investigation. . . .

“The Lord sends forth His ambassadors with a message of salvation, and those who hear He will hold responsible for the way in which they treat the words of His servants. Those who are sincerely seeking for truth will make a careful investigation, in the light of God’s word, of the doctrines presented to them.”¹⁰

How Jesus and His apostles dealt with prejudiced people

Jesus “went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were pos-

sessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan” (Matthew 4:23–25).



In these few Bible verses we find Christ going to different places—teaching, preaching, and healing the people. As they received special attention from Jesus and their diseases were healed, they opened their heart to receive Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Christ employed much more time healing the people than preaching the gospel. We know why. His work to restore the physical health was indeed the gospel in practice. The people believed His gospel because they had already enjoyed it, and thus their prejudice was broken.

The apostles, who had an intensive course of three and a half years with Christ, the Master Teacher, were able to follow His instructions in working for souls, after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They applied the same methods that Christ had applied to win souls to God’s kingdom. They healed the sick, raised the dead, and preached the truth as Christ had done.

“Peter did not refer to the teachings of Christ to prove his position, because he knew that the prejudice of his hearers was so great that his words on this subject would be of no effect. Instead, he spoke to them of David, who was regarded by the Jews as one of the patriarchs of their nation. [Acts 2:25–27, 29, 31, 32 quoted.]”¹¹

“The arguments of the apostles alone, though clear and convincing, would not have removed the prejudice that had withstood so much evidence. But the Holy Spirit sent the arguments home to hearts with divine power. The words of the apostles were as sharp

arrows of the Almighty, convicting men of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory."¹²

We also need to use Christ's methods

Those who are involved in the work of evangelization know how difficult it is to win prejudiced souls. However, if we are guided by the Holy Spirit, He will give us wisdom to deal with those souls in ways that their prejudice will be removed. There are different methods to overcome prejudice, and let us consider a few:

The medical missionary work

"True sympathy between man and his fellow men is to be the sign distinguishing those who love and fear God from those who are unmindful of His law. How great the sympathy that Christ expressed in coming to this world to give His life a sacrifice for a dying world! His religion led to the doing of genuine medical missionary work. He was a healing power. 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,' He said. This is the test that the great Author of truth used to distinguish between true religion and false. God wants His medical missionaries to act with the tenderness and compassion that Christ would show were He in our world.

"How slow men are to understand God's preparation for the day of His power. He works today to reach hearts in the same way that He worked when Christ was upon this earth. In reading the Word of God, we see that Christ brought medical missionary work into His ministry. Cannot our eyes be opened to discern Christ's methods? Cannot we understand the commission He gave to His disciples and to us?

"The world must have an antidote for sin. As the medical missionary works intelligently to relieve suffering and save life, hearts are softened. Those who are helped are filled with gratitude. As the medical missionary works upon the body, God works upon the heart."¹³

"As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries, to heal the sin-sick souls by giving them the message of salvation. This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can."¹⁴

"The Scriptures are not to be adapted to meet the prejudice and jealousy of men. They can be understood only by those who are humbly seeking for a knowledge of the truth that they may obey it."¹⁵

"Whatever the difference in religious belief, a call from suffering humanity must be heard and answered. Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God."¹⁶

"My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts. Be sure to work in a way that will remove prejudice instead of creating it. And remember that those who know

the truth for this time,
and yet confine
their efforts to
their own
churches,

refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties."¹⁷

Publications

"I have been shown that the publications already have been doing a work upon some minds in other countries in breaking down the walls of prejudice and superstition."¹⁸

Camp meetings

"In our work we have been perplexed to know how to break through the barriers of worldliness and prejudice, and bring before the people the precious truth which means so much to them. The Lord has instructed us that the camp meeting is one of the most important instrumentalities for the accomplishment of this work."¹⁹

Before working for those who are prejudiced against the remnant people of God, as members of God's church we need to fall on the Rock Christ Jesus. We need to overcome our own prejudices against each other as did the apostles before the day of Pentecost. Then, filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be ready to work successfully in behalf of those who are in darkness.

May the Lord help us with His wonderful grace to fulfill His purpose and reveal His righteousness! ❧

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Are Shortcuts Safe?



By Jeff Grimaldi

Firefighters are a very close knit group of people, but that bond doesn't happen overnight. The process begins after fire academy, when the candidate has successfully passed the state exam. Each one is then a state certified firefighter who begins the year of probation. It may take that one probationary year or longer (and in some instances never) before that person is accepted as a real firefighter. It is a year of hard work for candidates to prove themselves to see if they are what the state says that they are: Firefighters.

In the process of becoming a firefighter, a person must sacrifice his or her own personal comforts and desires to achieve a greater goal. The true Christian goes through the same experience. Through faith, believers in Christ seek to glorify their Saviour through their actions and ultimately achieve the desired goal of sanctification. A person who pretends to be a firefighter but

is not will soon be discovered when it comes time for action. A Christian must understand the meaning of true sanctification. It is this process which we wish to analyze today.

What is the spiritual correlation between becoming "a real firefighter" and in becoming "a real Christian"? To put it another way, what is the correlation between justification and sanctification—are they both achieved by faith? Where do works fit in? We must look at several issues:

1. Justification—how does it work?
2. What is sanctification—how is sanctification achieved?
3. The difference between true and false sanctification; and
4. Will we ever fully reach that state of sanctification?

We will see that both justification and sanctification are achieved by trusting not in our own works but in the

works of Him in whom we believe, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Justification—a necessary work?

Why do we need to be justified with God? What is it about us that needs justification? “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). There is not one person in this whole big world, throughout all of time, who has not committed at least one sin. But what is it about sin that causes a problem? “Satan was once an angel of light, but he was cast out of heaven when he became rebellious against God. Sin separates both men and angels from God.”¹ There is a rift between God and humanity, that is caused by sin. What must we do when we realize that we are in this condition?

The most important question ever known to humans was asked in the book of Job. “How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4). The answer is both simple and yet complicated. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:23–28). The justification of human beings is only achieved by a belief in the blood of Jesus Christ and His righteousness. God is the justifier, not us. It is not by our works and not by any amount of law keeping that we can ever become justified before God.

Nonetheless, the Lord desires that we dwell together with Him. But as He cannot abide with sin, the Lord requires that we reach a higher condition, which is referred to as sanctification. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteous-

There is a rift between God and man that is caused by sin. What must we do when we realize that we are in this condition?

ness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Through what process can we arrive at this condition in our life? How is it achieved?

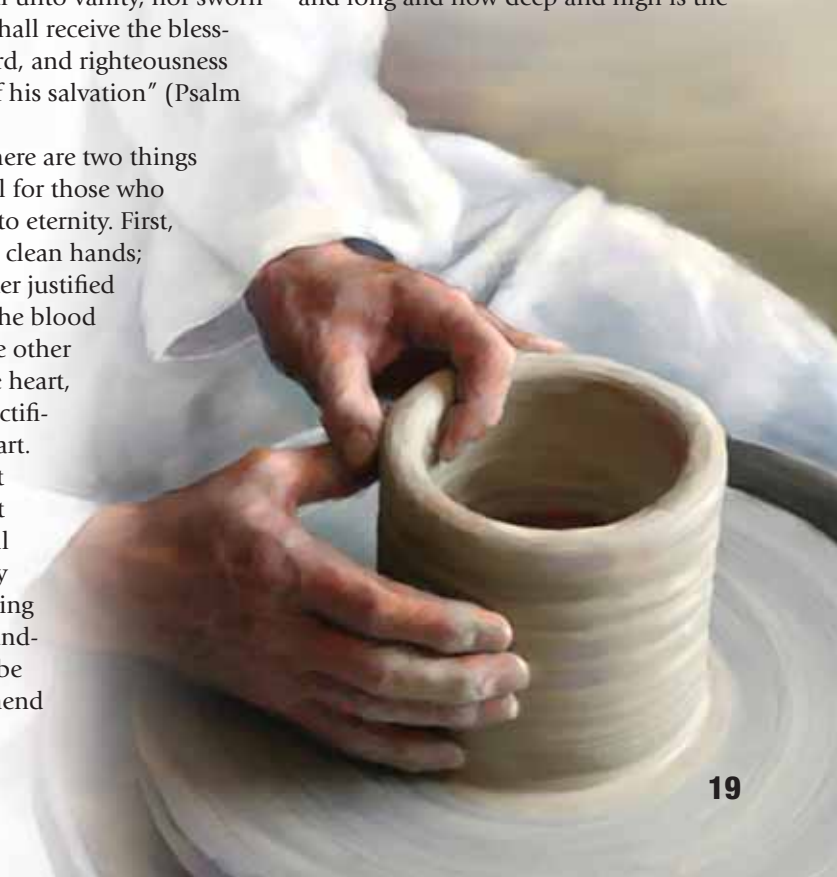
What does it mean to be sanctified?

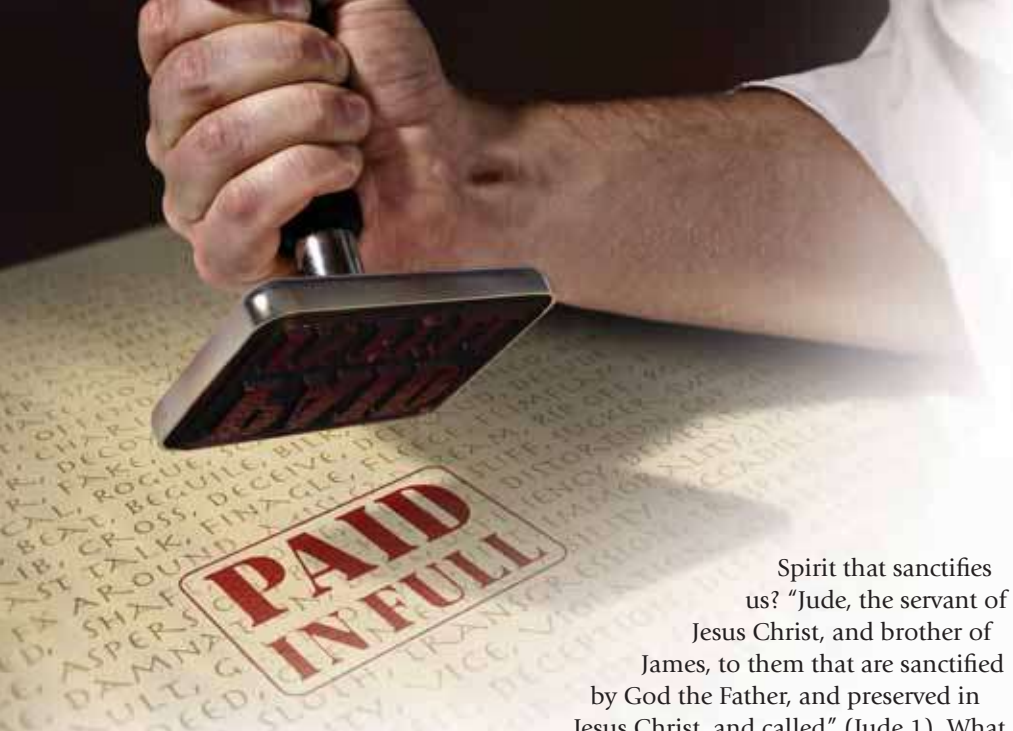
First of all, let us see what “to sanctify” means. The *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* defines it as: “to make holy; consecrate, to purify or free from sin.” There are two aspects to sanctification: One is the consecration aspect and the other is the purification aspect. In the consecration phase—things, places, animals and people are set apart for a holy purpose. (See Leviticus 27:14, 16, 26; Exodus 13:1, 2, and 2 Chronicles 7:11, 16.) Let us focus then on the purification of the human being and how this can be obtained by the Christian. When it comes to sanctification, it is King David who asks the all important question: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:3–5).

Notice that there are two things that are essential for those who are on the road to eternity. First, we need to have clean hands; that is, a character justified and washed in the blood of Jesus. And the other is to have a pure heart, which is the sanctification of the heart. How is the heart sanctified? “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend

with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:17–21).

This is one powerful statement that we need to examine. First of all it says “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Faith is the key issue here for Christ to dwell in the heart. Then, we become “rooted and grounded in love.” This indicates that Christ’s love is in the heart, where it has taken hold. When fighting a structure spot where the real source is burning, it is most important to find the hidden fire. It could be in the roof or in the walls or even underneath the building. Fire must be searched for high and low, otherwise that fire will rekindle. We must do the same. Once God’s love has taken hold, we must search for it to comprehend how wide and long and how deep and high is the





love that God has for us. We must then be filled with the "fulness of God." Notice the progression here. One thing leading to another, ever moving forward.

But also take note of who is doing this work. Are we the ones? No, it is performed "according to the power that worketh in us." It is the power of God that works in us. We are the conduit or the instrument through which His power works. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Why do I need an agent?

A fire truck is a wonderful apparatus but without an engine it is useless. Without power, how would we operate our juicers, our blenders, or our water distillers? Without a power source how could we fly or drive from place to place? We also need power in our spiritual life. Where do we get it? "And he that keepeth [God's] commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3:24). "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16). It is the work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify us. He is the engine. Is it only the Holy

Spirit that sanctifies us? "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1). What else is in the process of sanctification? "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

We are empowered by God for the work of sanctification through the main agency of the Holy Spirit. The Father and the Son provide that power through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is here waiting for us to turn on the engine. We control how much power we are willing to let in.

"Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity."²

"God is love. He has shown that love is the gift of Christ. When 'He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' He withheld nothing from His purchased possession (John 3:16). He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and

efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary."³ The Holy Spirit is the agency to whom we are to submit our will.

Sanctification: worked *for* or worked *at*?

Is justification instantaneous? Yes! But for some people it is the hardest decision they will ever make and, for most, the hardest to keep. What about sanctification, is it also instantaneous? No!!! "Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime."⁴ "There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last."⁵ As we can see, it must be worked *at*, not worked *for*. What is it meant by that? If a person is tone deaf and therefore does not have a natural singing voice, can it be worked *for*? No, all the work in the world will not achieve a singing voice for such a person. But if that person already has a singing voice, can it be worked *at* to improve it? Yes. Is there a difference between the two? Most definitely.

After justification, sanctification is a step by step process that is ever moving forward. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Is this an unreasonable request that God has made: To present our bodies as a living sacrifice? No, of course not. This is achieved not by conforming to this world but by renewing our mind to know God's perfect will. That sounds great, but how do we make this transformation? When a person goes off to fire college to become a firefighter, courses must be taken in sequence. Fire behavior needs to be studied before putting out a fire. Different types of hose streams are needed for different fires. For example, a solid stream will not work well on an oil fire in a fast-food restaurant. It will spread the fire. If we want to be like Jesus we must also

follow the sequence He has set before us. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). This is necessary to achieve true sanctification.

True sanctification versus false sanctification

The whole world—and even the professed church of God—is seeking after instant gratification. Shortcuts can be great when we are driving, but they do not work in our spiritual life. When shortcuts are taken, we can get lost and never reach our destination. So many shortcuts have been taken! The churches today do not seem to know the difference between true and false sanctification. But the Bible gives us an excellent comparison between true and false sanctification. We can see the difference between one who submits by faith and one who does not, illustrated in the life of the following two apostles:

"John saw his own deficiencies, and was humbled by the revelation [that Christ manifested to him]. Day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. Day by day his heart was drawn out to Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. The power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, the strength and patience, that he saw in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration. He yielded his resentful, ambitious temper to the molding power of Christ, and divine love wrought in him a transformation of character.

"In striking contrast to the sanctification worked out in the life of John is the experience of his fellow disciple, Judas. Like his associate, Judas professed to be a disciple of Christ, but he possessed only a form of godliness. . . . Judas violated his conscience and yielded to temptation, fastening upon

We are empowered by God for the work of sanctification through the main agency of the Holy Spirit.

himself more securely his habits of evil. The practice of the truths that Christ taught was at variance with his desires and purposes, and he could not bring himself to yield his ideas in order to receive wisdom from heaven. . . . Evil desires, covetousness, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts were cherished until Satan gained full control of him."⁶

What a contrast between the two disciples! One listened and was obedient, the other listened but did not obey. Let us give ear to the one who did obey and see how he did it: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:1-5). There is a formula here, a progression of the sanctification process:

1. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (justification).
2. We must love each other who are the children of God.
3. Commandment keeping is not burdensome but a joy. The proof is our obedience.
4. We overcome the world by faith.

This takes us right back to Jesus, for it is faith in Him that gives us the power to overcome. We start with Jesus and end with Jesus. We bring it a full circle, with Jesus at the center and everywhere in between.

Inspiration puts it this way: "When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.

"Then there is yet another work to be accomplished, and this is of a progressive nature. The soul is to be sanctified through the truth. And this also is accomplished through faith. For it is only the grace of Christ, which we receive through faith, that the character can be transformed."⁷

"True sanctification is nothing more or less than to love God with all the heart, to walk in His commandments and ordinances blameless. Sanctification is not an emotion but a heaven-born principle that brings all the passions and desires under the control of the Spirit of God; and this work is done through our Lord and Saviour."⁸ Let us further emphasize this point:

"It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we



God is ever willing for us to submit to His will. We must strive by the power of God to achieve this true sanctification.

cannot change them. . . . Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness."⁹

Are we there yet?

"True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. . . . Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all."¹⁰ We can see from this statement that we are definitely not

there yet, but we can be. If we would examine our heart we would know this to be true. What more do we need? "Let us not forget that in his conversion and sanctification man must cooperate with God. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' the Word declares. 'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:12, 13). Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his own will. He possesses no power by which this change may be effected. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. He who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power."¹¹

The book of Ecclesiastes puts it into a nutshell—but oh what a nut, hearty, robust, and full of flavor. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). A simple statement but

one that encompasses so much thought, work, reflection, change, prayer, determination and, most of all, submission to the will of God. How far must we go in order to complete this journey? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). If we desire to see Jesus, we know

that we must be like Him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me' (John 14:30). Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

"It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus."¹²

God is ever willing for us to submit to His will. We must strive by the power of God to achieve this true sanctification. But it is only achieved by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, for He is the only way. ❧

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Are We Losing Our Children to the World?

By Veronica Collins

*I*n many respects we would need to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear not to see and hear the symptoms all around us of losing our children to the world.

When I was young, a popular saying in the media caught on: “It is 10:00 p.m., do you know where your children are?” Yes, do we really know exactly where our children are? Not just at ten o’clock, but at all hours of each and every day?

Furthermore, do we know what our children are doing?

“Just tapping into technology, Mom”

Perhaps, you think, there’s no need to worry—they are just on the computer in their bedrooms doing homework. Do you allow your children free access to the Internet in the privacy of their bedrooms? If so, do you realize that this provides sexual predators and all sorts of evildoers a virtual highway of access to their mind—especially through certain web sites and chat rooms which individuals disguised as fellow young people frequent to gather information about your children, seeking them as a prey? Parents, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Be aware that modern technology, as helpful as it can be—does not always operate exclusively for our best eternal interests. We need to be cognizant that evil is

too often mingled with good. In the Garden of Eden there was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The mother of us all plucked its tempting fruit, thinking to gain knowledge—to become wiser. Very quickly she began to doubt and question her loving Creator, and the result was disastrous.

By the way, with whom are our children talking on cell phones during church breaks, and in the afternoons of the sacred Sabbath hours? Might we further investigate: Are the conversations between mere children or youth usually of a holy, uplifting nature? Not to mention even, how did these precious little souls obtain and gain free reign of an expensive item such as a cell phone in the first place? For purposes of godly edification? Not likely.

Moreover, what possible logical reason could a parent conjure up as an excuse for a three-year-old having free reign of a cell phone? Sounds a bit bizarre? Nonetheless, this does happen.

In reality, magnifying a given circumstance such as Internet or cell phone use will not change the situation of losing our children to the world. That is just one small symptom. While recognizing things such as these may prove essential, the real problem stems much deeper. As parents and as fathers and mothers in spiritual Israel, we should rightfully blame ourselves if our children are slipping into the hands of the enemy’s camp. I used to have a little piece of paper posted to my mirror with a note: “You are looking at the problem.” Parents

“Parents are responsible, in a great degree, for the characters which their children develop.”

would have enough to do, should each family closely examine its own family relationship. The time has come for a thorough confession to God. Beforehand, parents remain the real problem, acting as “root and offspring” of their children’s actions. Perhaps things of the world, particularly jobs, have overwhelmed parents and many appear too rushed to spend quality time with the family.

Got a spare moment?

A few years back, while visiting in Oklahoma at the home of my sister, I decided to prepare an evening meal for their family. At that time, my sister’s three children (my two nieces and one nephew) were all teenagers and all living at home with their parents. After preparations were complete, I summoned the family to the dinner table. The entire family including the husband and the children were elated over this seemingly simplistic act.

What my sister’s family revealed to my ear years ago astonished me. The entire family could not remember the last time they had actually sat down as a family unit and shared a meal together. I suspect a memorable bonding session, and a lasting impression developed from this single experience. I still recall those happy smiling faces and the warmth of love cherished at my sister’s dinner table during that momentous Oklahoma evening meal.

Sometimes, families have already made great strides to place the family unit in seemingly close-knit ties. They have packed their bags and moved into the beautiful hills, mountains, or rolling countryside. Parents have sacrificed and have given the children a fine, down-to-earth Christian home. That is just what, for the sake of family, the people of God might obediently do—right? The action could prove right, and if one does the math, it might even add up correctly. Yet, have we also heard of families liv-

ing in the country with teenagers who beg Mom and Dad to take them to the city? The cry goes up from the bored child: “To the mall, to friends, out to eat pizza!”

Actually, is there anything wrong with shopping at the mall on occasion or eating a nice vegetarian or vegan pizza or visiting friends? Each of these actions depends on the motive. Parents should closely critique their own motives in everything. How about a child’s motive? Do children and youth actually want to play video games and just “hang out” (loiter) with their friends, wasting precious time?

“Young men who habitually mingle in the little groups gathered in stores or on the street, ever engaging in discussion or gossip, will never grow to the proportions of men of understanding.”¹

Is the reason for going to town to gaze at the fashion shrines in the mall display windows, and for our youth to educate themselves to dress as much like the world as possible, with all the glittery sequins and jeweled attire, tight clothing, or the opposite extreme of super-baggy and layered loose (to the point of falling off) clothing and such? (The list broadens. . . .)

Honestly, when some of us were teenagers, would even our non-Christian parents have let us out the front door onto the street if we were wearing what most of our youth wear today?

Who is responsible? Who decides what our children should wear? Aren’t you concerned when you see your own precious, now-curvaceous daughter roaming the streets in attire suitable for a harlot? Or your noble son now approaching manhood, slouching around like a beggar or bum?

Yes, we must not go to extremes. A child should not be made to feel so peculiar as to be “a gazing stock.” But who really forks out God’s money on ungodly children’s apparel? Again, the question is asked, where is the money coming from to purchase the pizzas, the

clothing, and the video games? Perhaps the children are earning some of their own already. But they are still under your roof!

“You excuse yourself by saying that your children are now beyond your control, too old for you to command. In this you mistake. None of your children are too old to respect your authority and obey your commands while they have the shelter of your roof. How old were Eli’s sons? They were married men; and Eli, as a father and a priest of God, was required to restrain them.”²

“Parents are responsible, in a great degree, for the characters which their children develop. Would that every father and mother could see that in their own home is a missionary field in which they may work unitedly for the salvation of the precious souls committed to their care.

“It is a sad fact, almost universally admitted and deplored, that the home education and training of the youth of today have been neglected. The father, as the head of his own household, should understand how to train his children for usefulness and duty. This is his special work, above every other. During the first few years of a child’s life, the molding of the disposition is committed principally to the mother; but she should ever feel that in her work she has the cooperation of the father. If he is engaged in business which almost wholly closes the door of usefulness to his family, he should seek other employment which will not prevent him from devoting some time to his children. If he neglects them, he is unfaithful to the trust committed to him of God.

“The father may exert an influence over his children which shall be stronger than the allurements of the world. He should study the disposition and character of the members of his little circle, that he may understand their needs and their dangers, and thus be prepared to repress the wrong and encourage the right.”³

“‘No time,’ says the father; ‘I have no time to give to the training of my children, no time for social and domestic enjoyments.’ Then you should not have taken upon yourself the responsibility of a family. By withholding from them

the time which is justly theirs, you rob them of the education which they should have at your hands. If you have children, you have a work to do, in union with the mother, in the formation of their characters.

"It is the cry of many mothers: 'I have no time to be with my children.' Then for Christ's sake spend less time on your dress. Neglect if you will to adorn your apparel. Neglect to receive and make calls. Neglect to cook an endless variety of dishes. But never, never neglect your children. What is the chaff to the wheat? Let nothing interpose between you and the best interests of your children."⁴

What about at church?

Brethren and sisters, we are in a crisis. If one has never experienced the opportunity, try teaching a youth's or children's class in our Sabbath schools, camp meetings, or other holy convocations, and one will easily observe attention, concentration, behavior, and even discipline issues among students. One might further note where children wish to sit during church services. Do our children cheerfully, obediently sit beside their parents—or do they prefer to nestle against "adopted" parents? Or farther yet, are they snuggling close to cherished friends as immature as they themselves? How about if they plop down alone on the very last, farthest back pew in the entire sanctuary? Are parents picking up on these non-verbal messages from their children? Do parents listen and hear these silent cries for attention? If parents need to force their children to come up and sit with them, it is a symptom that something is seriously wrong. Possibly the parents might be willing to move to where their children are, but if they're not together, something is gravely amiss.

"The moral taste of the worshippers in God's holy sanctuary must be elevated, refined, sanctified. This matter has been sadly neglected. Its importance has been overlooked, and as the result disorder and irreverence have become prevalent, and God has been dishonored. When the leaders in the church, ministers and people, fathers and

mothers, have not had elevated views of this matter, what could be expected of the inexperienced children? They are too often found in groups, away from the parents, who should have charge of them. Notwithstanding they are in the presence of God, and His eye is looking upon them; they are light and trifling; they whisper and laugh, are careless, irreverent, and inattentive."⁵

To blame all of what is happening to our children on the parents alone would be misleading. Sometimes, the children have reached "the age of accountability" and stand as much, if not more, in fault of their own lack of spirituality. Nonetheless, parental neglect stands paramount as the leading cause of losing our children to the world.

A savor of life unto life

"Parents should study the best and most successful manner of winning the love and confidence of their children, that they may lead them in the right path. They should reflect the sunshine of love upon the household. There are no influences so potent, no memories so enduring, as those of childhood. The parents' work must begin with the child in its infancy, that it may receive the right impress of character ere the world shall place its stamp on mind and heart.


"While the spirit of love should pervade the household, it is the duty of parents not to be ruled, but to rule. All under the roof should respect the parental discipline. The law of the household should be held sacred. Parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. By their own example they should lead the way to heaven. The father, as priest of the household, should explain and enforce the word of God. Let the children be taught to honor and obey their parents, that they may also learn to honor and obey their heavenly Father. Parents stand in God's place to their little ones. When fathers and mothers realize this, they will find at home a field wherein to exercise their powers for the accomplishment of great good.

"There are two ways to deal with children—ways that differ widely

in principle and in results. Faithfulness and love, united with wisdom and firmness, in accordance with the teachings of God's word, will bring happiness in this life and in the next. Neglect of duty, injudicious indulgence, failure to restrain or correct the follies of youth, will result in unhappiness and final ruin to the children, and disappointment and anguish to the parents."⁶

Don't lose this opportunity—it will be gone before you know it!

Parents, do you desire the companionship of your children in heaven? Then why not appreciate them now—while you have opportunity? Why not diligently seek to prepare them for heaven while the last moments of probation still linger? Clearly, child rearing is a complex undertaking. In a united and decided effort, the church ultimately needs wisdom from God to rightfully accomplish all within its power to disappoint the enemy's plans to dissolve the family unit and snatch our children from the church and place them in the world. Honestly, it is only by faithful adherence to the principles of present truth and constant, earnest vigilance that we will be able to rightfully claim the promise: "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children" (Isaiah 49:24, 25).

Through God's grace and power of deliverance, may our choices today place our children together with us faithfully and firmly on the Lord's side, instead of allowing them to be trapped in the subtle, yet iron clutches of the world! 

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Peculiar Parents of Principle



By Cherie Shelor

The happy news came that they were going to become parents. They had prayed long and murmured not, and now their prayer was answered. A son would be born to Zacharias and Elisabeth. We are told that “they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments” (Luke 1:6). Because of their faithfulness, they received favor and light from above regarding the upbringing of their son, John.

Isn't this what we should desire as parents? Light from God on how to educate and train up our children. If this is indeed our desire, we have the example of Zacharias and Elisabeth to give us insight into the solemn responsibility to train up our children according to the blueprint of heaven.

In order for Zacharias and Elisabeth to accomplish the heavenly plan, they would have to do things out of the ordinary.

“In the natural order of things, the son of Zacharias would have been educated for the priesthood. But the training of the rabbinical schools

would have unfitted him for his work.”¹

Zacharias and Elisabeth obeyed the angel. In John's childhood, he was educated and trained by his parents so as to not be corrupted by associations.

“In childhood and youth the character is most impressible. The power of self-control should then be acquired. By the fireside and at the family board influences are exerted whose results are as enduring as eternity. More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be victorious or vanquished in the battle of life. Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest, for this life and for the life to come.”²

Zacharias and Elisabeth might have been criticized with comments such as, “You are sheltering John too much; he will be unsociable!” or “You are depriving him of a good education,” or even, “Zacharias and Elisabeth, you are becoming too fanatical!”

But Zacharias and Elisabeth remembered their calling as parents, and obeyed the angel. Compromise they did not. Their obedience to God was more important than the superficial ambitions of the masses. They were indeed “peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

John's education by the "fireside" made him sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

If John was going to be holy and carry out his life purpose, he could not be like the youth of his day or do the things they were doing. He needed freedom from the distracting influences that would have surrounded him had his parents disobeyed the angel. He needed, as we also need, to be in a place where the voice of God could be heard and His handiwork seen.

We need to be in nature and learn of nature's God. We need to train our appetites and passions to be in subjection to the Holy Spirit's leading. John was to learn temperance and self-control.

Neither John nor Jesus—our ultimate example—went to the worldly schools or even the denominational schools of their day. They did not seek an accredited degree from the university at Jerusalem, neither did they attempt to learn from the teachers of theology. They were to learn directly from the source of truth—the Word of God, from nature, and by practical labor. John's education by the "fireside" made him sensitive to the Holy Spirit, therefore he was able to understand what was happening to Israel. John's later training in the wilderness was to "steel" him from the consequences of the message he would proclaim. God needed to "steel" him against unjust criticism and misrepresentation, for it would surely come against him. John would have to rebuke the excesses of the day, the ways, and customs of the world. He would have to reprove Israel of their wickedness, backsliding, and sins. We are told that in the days of John there was "greed for riches, and the love of luxury and display had become widespread. Sensuous pleasures, feasting and drinking, were causing physical disease and degeneracy, numbing the spiritual perceptions, and lessening the sensibility to sin. John was to stand as a reformer. By his abstemious life and plain dress he was to rebuke the excesses of his time."³

"[John] saw his people deceived, self-satisfied, and asleep in their sins. He longed to rouse them to a holier life. The message that God had given him to bear was designed to startle them from their lethargy, and cause them to tremble because of their great wickedness. Before the seed of the gospel

could find lodgment, the soil of the heart must be broken up. Before they would seek healing from Jesus, they must be awakened to their danger from the wounds of sin.


"God does not send messengers to flatter the sinner. He delivers no message of peace to lull the unsanctified into fatal security. He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces the soul with arrows of conviction."⁴

John reproved the sins of all, including those of the priests. His experience will be repeated in the life of God's people just before the second coming of Jesus. In preparing the way for Christ's first advent, John was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for the Lord's second advent. We are called to the same work as he was. Aren't we privileged to partake in such a work?

John was equipped to stand in the presence of monarchs and worldly great men. Why? Because his parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, walked "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless" (Luke 1:6). They obeyed the commission to be different and, as a result, John was "unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine."⁵

What about us?

God has called us who are living at the close of time to do a work of reform. It will start at home, then flow out as sweet water to others.

It will require sacrifice of ambition, self-discipline, purity, and holiness. It will make you different from the masses. But you are called to fulfill that which others will refuse or neglect to fulfill, "to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:72-75). 

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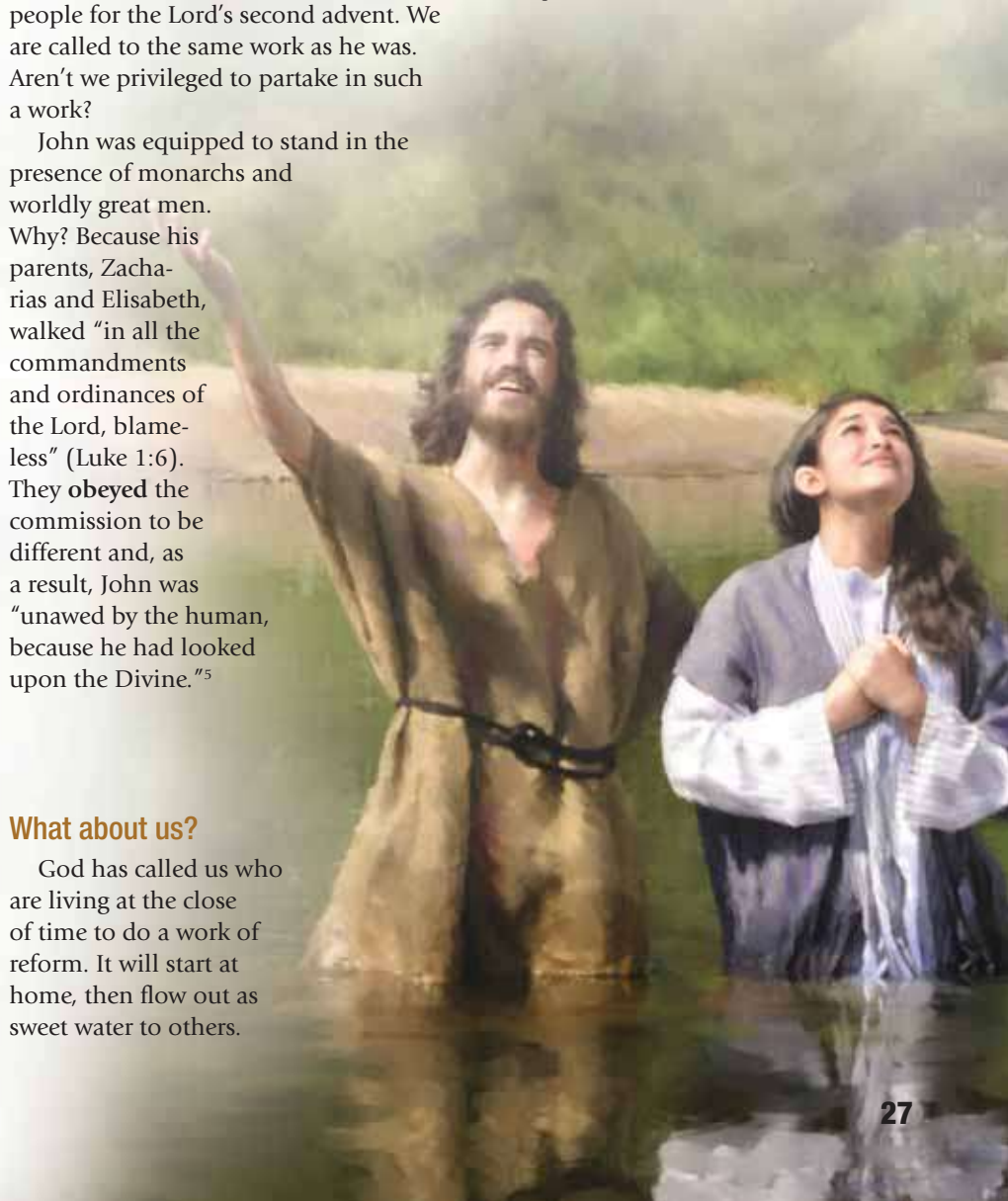
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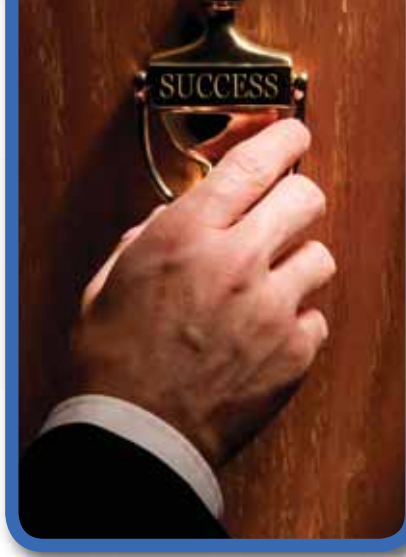
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House-to-House Evangelism: I've Seen How it Works!



By Tony Maraizu

In the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard in Matthew 20:1–16, Jesus Christ made us understand two things. 1. He condemned idleness in His service. 2. He also condemned the desire for high wages in His service. In fact, He said that His reward is eternal life.

“There is a work to be done in our cities—work to be done in every place. God will take men from the plow, from the sheepfold, from the vineyard, and will put them in the place of those who think that they must have the highest wages. Those who grasp for high wages will find in the money they get all the reward they will ever receive. Such ones cannot be expected to feel a burden for the salvation of perishing souls. The Lord cannot use such ones in His work. Until they banish selfishness from their hearts, their efforts are worthless.”¹

Jesus owns us, and He best knows our needs, and He has surely promised to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19).

In Matthew 6:33, He tells us to seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness, and everything we need will be provided to us. He did not forsake those who worked for Him, neither will He forsake those who are working for Him now.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Where do we begin?

Nothing is more encouraging in the missionary work than these words from the lips of our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself.

Practically speaking, missionary work is not always easy, but the moment we cease from humans and depend only upon Jesus for strength, He will surely see us through.

A highly successful way of doing this task is through canvassing. Canvassing is to go from house to house and offer publications containing the present truth. Is it something wrong if one refuses to go from house to house preaching the gospel?

“My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts. Be sure to work in a way that will remove prejudice instead of creating it. And remember that those who know the truth for this time, and yet confine their efforts to their own churches, refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties.”²

In this house-to-house evangelism, many will find so many discouragements—the enemy has made it so. In some areas, you will be mocked, taunted, abused, laughed at, or even refused entry. Jesus our Lord foretold these things, He said, “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have

persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

“And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Matthew 10:12–14).

In house-to-house evangelism, we can only be successful if we follow Christ’s method.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”³

“We should do as Christ did. Wherever He was, in the synagogue, by the wayside, in the boat thrust out a little from the land, at the Pharisee’s feast or the table of the publican, He spoke to men of the things pertaining to the higher life.”⁴

“There are many who need the ministration of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved, if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In the very family, the neighborhood,

the town where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart."⁵

"One of the most effective ways in which light can be communicated is by private, personal effort. In the home circle, at your neighbor's fireside, at the bedside of the sick, in a quiet way you may read the Scriptures and speak a word for Jesus and the truth. Thus you may sow precious seed that will spring up and bring forth fruit."⁶

Offer practical help

There is no specific method in the Bible or in the Spirit of Prophecy as to how we can win souls, but the word of God clearly says that "he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). This means that we should do everything possible to bring souls to Christ. It could be through sharing what you have with others—giving people a lift, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, caring for the fatherless, or being hospitable.

"The suffering and destitute of all classes are our neighbors; and when their wants are brought to our knowledge, it is our duty to relieve them as far as possible. A principle is brought out in this parable that it would be well for the followers of Christ to adopt. First meet the temporal necessities of the needy and relieve their physical wants and sufferings, and you will then find an open avenue to the heart, where you may plant the good seed of virtue and religion."⁷

Experience has shown that there has never been any successful method in missionary work than meeting first the temporal necessities of the needy and relieving their physical wants and sufferings, which gives a direct access to the soul.

"By personal labor reach those around you. Become acquainted with them. Preaching will not do the work that needs to be done. Angels of God

attend you to the dwellings of those you visit. This work cannot be done by proxy. Money lent or given will not accomplish it. Sermons will not do it. By visiting the people, talking, praying, sympathizing with them, you will win hearts. This is the highest missionary work that you can do. To do it, you will need resolute, persevering faith, unwearying patience, and a deep love for souls."⁸

"Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account for the souls of men, and make the most of the privileges that God gives you of laboring with Him in His moral vineyard. Do not neglect speaking to your neighbors, and doing them all the kindness in your power, that you 'by all means may save some.' We need to seek for the spirit that constrained the apostle Paul to go from house to house pleading with tears, and teaching 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20:21)."⁹

"Visit your neighbors in a friendly way, and become acquainted with them. . . . Those who do not take up this work, those who act with the indifference that some have manifested, will soon lose their first love, and will begin to censure, criticize, and condemn their own brethren."¹⁰

"House-to-house laborers are needed. The Lord calls for decided efforts to be put forth in places where the people know nothing of Bible truth."¹¹

It's not so difficult


In our house-to-house evangelism, we shall find the following helpful:

1. Always put a smile on your face.
2. Be the first to greet people.
3. Learn to be sociable; say hello and start a conversation.

4. If possible, you can join in people's own conversations in order to turn the conversation towards salvational issues. For example, a brother and I went to a place where people were very busy debating political issues. I was not very pleased when he joined the conversation. Shortly, however, he asked a question, "Do you know that this politics shall come to an end one day?" They answered with a question, "How can that be?" and the brother said, "The coming of Jesus will bring all these things to the end." As a matter of fact, within a few minutes, none of them mentioned politics any more, but were very busy asking, "How shall His coming be?" Thus we were able to tell them more about Christ Jesus, and we were able to give them some pamphlets.

5. Do not be easily offended. The Spirit of Prophecy says, "Be not easily provoked. Let the praises of God be in your heart and upon your lips."¹²

In our door-to-door evangelism, many who taunted us the first day we visited them are studying with us now.

"The presentation of the truth, in love and simplicity, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour. By songs of praise, by humble, heartfelt prayers, many will be reached. The divine Worker will be present to send conviction to hearts. 'I am with you always,' is His promise. With the assurance of the abiding presence of such a helper we may labor with faith and hope and courage."¹³ 

References

¹ *The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1904.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 34, 35.

³ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

⁴ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 338.

⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 141.

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 428, 429.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 226, 227.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 41.

⁹ *The Review and Herald*, March 13, 1888.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1902.

¹¹ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 540.

¹² *Our High Calling*, p. 174.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 34.



Romania

*Missionary school (left),
Colporteur seminar (below).*



USA

*Tennessee camp meeting
(below), Elmira (New York)
church dedication (far below).*





Canada

Brethren in Toronto.



Bulgaria

Brethren and friends.



Congo

Baptism (above) and youth convention (right).





A Maiden and a *Miracle*

By B. Monteiro



Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Have you ever thought of how you can be a missionary for God, even while you are still a child?

There is an interesting story in the Bible of a little Israelite girl who had been captured by the Syrian army. It would not be a very pleasant thing to be captured, would it? But this slave girl must have decided to make the best out of her hard situation. She set a good example in the home where she was working, because the people there believed in what she said. Let us read about it:

"Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he

would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel" (2 Kings 5:1-4).

The story goes on to tell about how God healed Naaman the captain through the prophet Elisha. Normally, the disease of leprosy was impossible to cure, so this really was a miracle. And if the little girl had not inspired faith in the heart of Naaman and of his family, he would not have been helped. Jesus later mentioned what a special case this was when He said: "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27).

Yes, the little girl had suffered the sadness of being captured, but good did come out of it. And the good came largely because of how she handled her situation. Instead of being angry at Naaman, she thought of how he was suffering too, and she wanted to help him. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25).

Let's decide to be the ones to be a good example, be kind, and bring a good word to others, even when things are hard for us. You never know when God may decide to make a miracle out of it! *R*

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