

TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE

"What is Christian Education?" Let's press to the very heart of this important subject
_ to the "sweet pith" of the learning process _and test this amazing treasury for ourselves.

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE REVEALED

"FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS"

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." - 2Tim.3:16,17.

In infinite wisdom God bases the full revelation of His redemptive action on a perfect display of His righteousness:

Firstly: In the man Jesus Christ _ "the author and finisher of our faith."

Secondly: In a remnant people who grasp the scope of His divine mission -- In a church that realizes and accepts the actuality that their Lord's victory cannot secure a universe free of sin without their own testimony to illustrate and vindicate His righteousness.

God subjects His entire universe to these two inscrutable demonstrations to silence forever an insufferable allegation.

Without these two distinct yet concurrent testimonies, the diabolical claim of the highest intelligence ever created must stand forever.

LUCIFER'S CLAIM: LAW SUPPRESSES FREE AGENCY

Lucifer boldly asserts that God's law suppresses free agency. Amazingly heaven allows this claim to be brought to the most critical test. And while Satan asserts that he has already proven his point, he will yet have to concede that Christ's death offers man a valid way to recover his original estate -- that is, if divine grace can finally bring a corporate body of believers into heaven's perfect working order. And this is precisely what the gospel commission promises to do before probation closes. [1](#)

GOOD NEWS -FREE AGENCY IN THE PERFECTION OF THE LAW

At this very moment God is answering this diabolical assertion of Satan's by demonstrating unequivocally that *Christ's personal victory over sin empowers His church to enjoy free agency in the perfection of the law.* This is precisely what anti-christ claims is impossible. But the premise for such a revelation has already been laid in the church of Christ:

"...to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph.3:9-12 NIV

A TESTIMONY THAT GOES BEYOND...

Still the question remains: Will this "eternal purpose" move God's people to approach their part in the plan of redemption with something more than human effort and smart machinery?

The Lord expects the testimony of His people to go beyond correct teaching, beyond exemplary service, and beyond a nominal form of organization. They must either demonstrate the Lord's own standard of righteousness, or perpetuate the prevailing "low grade of piety" and so prove the adversary's point. "This gospel of the kingdom" is resting entirely on the reception of a divine empowerment that exceeds even that evinced in the humanity of Christ: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father." ²

Here is expressed the boding of God's ultimate design for His church -- not just a loving extension of Christ's earthly ministry, but a perfect revelation of divine power as never before seen, even in the life of Christ. This is not just a provision that gives humanity a demonstrable testimony. By clothing the church in His own righteousness, Christ empowers His people to meet the enemy in His stead. They must finish what He could never accomplish by Himself.

THE CHURCH - SAVED FROM "THE LOW GRADE OF PIETY" ³

"This gospel of the kingdom" calls for two confessions:

THE FIRST IS CORPORATE: The church has yet to understand her high calling. She has yet to enter into that unity which demonstrates her union with Christ. *"What kind of a future is before us, if we shall fail to come into the unity of the faith?" ⁴* How many lament the disorders that are fostered in the name of Christ, yet have no idea how to rid the church of such evils. *"The time has come for earnest and powerful efforts to rid the church of the slime and filth which is tarnishing her purity. The church of Christ is called to be a holy, powerful people, a name and praise in all the earth." ⁵* The church is just as guilty of the blood of Christ as were the Jews if she does not recognize and enter into His compelling burden, *"that they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me." ⁶* *"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world." ⁷*

THE SECOND IS INDIVIDUAL: Not understanding the nature and scope of his calling, the believer has been confirmed in a faith that is virtually powerless. His concept of God's redemptive action is seriously limited. The real purpose of heaven's power has been denied him, and must yet be revealed, as expressed in Christ's own testimony. *This not only calls for a new confession; it requires a new baptism in "present truth." ⁸*

There is a universal cry for a clearer definition of God's redemptive action. Many Christians admit this openly, but the great majority are not willing to acknowledge their faulty beliefs. They try to hide this unspoken admission with formal graces, practiced phrases, and cryptic doctrines that are used to cover up shameful weaknesses. But all such excuses only accentuate the need for a better gospel, a better kind of unity.

If believers ever receive what they so desperately need, the church itself must be re-instated in her holy privileges. ⁹ She must be saved from "the low grade of piety" that is being passed on to her children if believers are truly to be translated into the kingdom of light. What kind of church is going to be able to do this? "The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. She should keep herself pure, sanctified, holy. Never should she indulge in any foolishness, for she is the bride of a king. Yet she does not realize her exalted position. *If she understood this, she would be all-glorious within.*" ¹⁰ Given these facts, how can we limit sanctification to the experience of the individual -- even were we to concede that it is the work of a lifetime?

DOES "PRACTICE MAKE PERFECT"?

There is no question that sanctification is a life-long process of character development. But the question remains, is practice the real issue in the ongoing debate over perfection? If practice is so vital, what hope does this short generation have? "I saw that those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ's sake.... Now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months. They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again." ¹¹

A face-saving bumper sticker pleads, *"Please be patient, God isn't through with me yet."* What is this? -- *I'm trying to be good; I'm going to do better; I know I'm not making it, but won't you please give me a break?* Where is the empowerment of grace? How many saints, do you suppose, have learned to be good by trying? And how many of them excused their sins on the premise that they're "only human." Did Jesus ever deplore His human nature?

Justification is the very essence of Christianity -- the imputed virtue of a Holy Life; the embodiment of divine love in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of God's Son; the instantaneous and miraculous work of the Spirit. Yet sanctification is religiously upheld as "the work of a lifetime," that rugged process of human development which at last brings us to Christian perfection, so strangely out of reach until the last breath is taken -- until some mysterious voice proclaims, "Well done, thou dying sinner." No, "...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. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." ¹²

Finite reasoning may bring some comfort to those who are working their way to heaven. But such mental gymnastics will never solve the problem. Not only is our sense of guilt to be removed; we must actually stand before God "as though we had never sinned." ¹³ We must have this blessed assurance, or continue to struggle with an inferiority complex. Self-justifying humanity is never satisfied with its own standing: It is forever seeking new recognition. If there's any question about its standing, actual guilt is there. All humanity suffers this horrid depravity, and constantly demands a new supply of time-released "works pills" to cope with the affliction. *But this constant striving only strengthens self-will, and buries guilt deeper in the slimy pit of obstinate denial.* Surface work will never answer a soul's need, much less satisfy the grace of God. There may be a marvelous form of godliness, but if our righteousness does not surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT

When Jesus told the paralytic to walk, did He offer him a pill to mask the pain as he crippled along? Rather, "Take courage My son, *your sins are forgiven.*" ¹⁴ The scribes pounced on this

kind of righteousness -- "This fellow blasphemes!" And Jesus responded, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, and walk?' But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...Rise take up your bed, and go home." The axiom is perfectly clear, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* [15](#)

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [16](#) We're not only set free from our sins, we're set free from sinning when we "walk in newness of life." [17](#) "Newness of life" is not just the beginning of a washing process. Justification is not a drug to mask the pain of learning to walk again, "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." [18](#)

Justification is not a blanket, and sanctification is not human perfection. Sanctification is just as necessary to justification as justification is to sanctification. In fact, we must have sanctification to have justification because God has chosen the weak things of this world to shame those things that are strong. "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." [19](#)

"Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities. *We may claim sanctification.*" [20](#)
"Through the righteousness of Christ we shall stand before God pardoned, and as though we had never sinned." [21](#)

THE "SWEET PITH" REVEALED

Here, then, is "the sweet pith of true education." The work of the true teacher is always to lead the student into a *sanctified environment* that serves his success -- not his failure. From the very beginning of the Christian's long and happy journey into the mysteries of true knowledge, he has the same privileges his Master had. He is to experience success in all he undertakes. Any method of teaching, any science, any structure that falls short of this is working against Christ. It makes no difference how interesting the experience may be. It makes no difference whether the focus is on the experience of the individual, the home, the school, or the church. All students -- beginners, advanced, slow learners, fast learners -- all need a pure, sanctified environment to succeed. And that environment is found only in the blood of the Lamb, in the truth (*as it is in Jesus*), in the church that is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. [22](#) *Only a church that is created holy, and kept holy by the blood of the Lamb, can meet the challenge that God's people face in this crisis hour.* - ges

"There is a little hope in one direction: Take the young men and women, and place them where they will come as little in contact with our churches as possible, that the low grade of piety which is current in this day shall not leaven their ideas of what it means to be a Christian...."

"...So perfect was the example and life of Christ, that not the least jot of inconsistency existed between His instructions and His life. Now, what a marked contrast is seen to exist in the truth we profess to believe as a people, and the life and character!" - Ellen White, 1892, MS 995, p. 333

Abbreviation Key and Textual Support for EGW references. *

1 Mic.4:1-5; Joel 2,3 NAS; Is.8:16-18 NAS, e.g.

2 Jn.14:12

3 *MS:995, p.333 (quotation in box above)

4 *TM:468

5 *TM:450

6 Jn.17:17-26

7 1Jn.4:17

8 *EW:63

9 *DA:826

10 *7BC:986

11 *EW:67

12 1Thess.5:23,24

13 *5BC:1142

14 Matt.9:1-7

15 Rom.8:1

16 Rom.8:3,4

17 Rom.6:4

18 2Pet.1:3 NAS

19 1Cor.1:27-31 NAS

20 *2SM:32

21 *Signs of the Times, April 10, 1893

22 Eph.1:19-23