

THE PRESENT TRUTH

Bishop Stephen D. Lewis

Others Catch Your Spirit

God wants you to let him manage you that you may be a lovable Christian. The Lord would have the natural and hereditary traits of character come under the pruning knife. Look steadfastly unto Jesus, that you may catch his spirit, and cherish the qualities of Christlike character. Then it will be recognized by all who have any connection with you, that you have learned of Christ his meekness, his affection, his tenderness, his sympathy. Never rest satisfied until you possess a loving and lovable spirit. Your words may come from the good treasure of the heart, to strengthen, help, bless, and win all around you. True conscientiousness will make the religious life attractive. But your religion has altogether too much acidity to be palatable. You sour your influence by a stubborn, set determination; your critical censoriousness sets the teeth on edge. God help you, my brother, for you need melting.

Others catch your spirit. The seeds we sow will bear harvest in goodness, patience, kindness, and love, or exactly the opposite. It is not your purpose to do wrong acts, but you do not see the necessity of doing pleasant acts, so that from you men receive a better impression of the Christian character. More of the spirit of the beloved disciple John would make you more fragrant and lovable, and a far better example of what constitutes a true Christian life.

Many, many, need melting over. Be sound in principle, true to God, but do not manifest one stern, ungenial phase of character. God does not want you to incur contempt by manifesting a disposition like a ball of putty, but he does want you to be in principle as sound as a rock, yet with a healthful mellowness. Like the Master, be full of grace and truth. Jesus was incorruptible, undefiled, yet in his life were mingled gentleness, meekness, benignity, sympathy, and love. The poorest were not afraid to approach him; they did not fear a rebuff. What Christ was every Christian should strive to be. In holiness and winsomeness of character He is our model.

"Learn of me," says Jesus; "for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." We should all learn of Christ what it means to be a Christian. Let us learn of him how to combine firmness, justice, purity, and integrity with unselfish courtesy and kindly sympathy. Thus the character becomes lovable and attractive. The beauty of holiness will disarm scoffers.

The workers at the Review and Herald office will not enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless their character reflects the character of Christ. The heart must receive the divine current, and let it flow out in rich streams of mercy and grace to other hearts. All who would win souls to Christ must be winsome. A word to the wise is sufficient. *{Miscellaneous Collections 1888 Pg.1424}*

In all ages God's appointed witnesses have exposed themselves to reproach and persecution for the truth's sake. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, the chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true to his allegiance to heaven. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions, and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives, and friends; yet he maintained his integrity. Jeremiah could not be deterred from speaking the words that God had given him to speak; and his testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit. Stephen was stoned because he preached Christ and Him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, beaten with rods, stoned, and finally put to death because he was a faithful messenger for God to the Gentiles. And John was banished to the Isle of Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

These examples of human steadfastness bear witness to the faithfulness of God's promises--of His abiding presence and sustaining grace. They testify to the power of faith to withstand the powers of the world. It is the work of faith to rest in God in the darkest hour, to feel, however sorely tried and tempest-tossed, that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time to estimate aright the worth of the eternal riches.

Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches, of living a life free from trial. Instead He calls upon them to follow Him in the path of self-denial and reproach. He who came to redeem the world was opposed by the united forces of evil. In an un pitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. His every word and act revealed divine compassion, and His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. *{Acts of the Apostles Pg.576}*

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