

Christ is Victor

SEP/OCT 2008

“The Christian Home”

In God's dealing with Noah and Abraham, and with Israel in the Pass-over and at Mount Sinai, we repeatedly notice the deep meaning of the united mention of father and children in His commands and promises—"thou and thy house", "thou and thy seed", "ye and your children", "thou and thy son". Such is the language of the covenant God. In the words of Joshua we have the response from earth, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Josh. 24:15)

The divine principle is clear: the parent accepts God's promises for his family as well as for himself. The covenant undertaking of the Father in heaven is met by the covenant obligation of the father on earth. Joshua is to us the model of a godly parent. In him we can see how to fulfil our parental responsibilities.

Consecrate Yourself

Joshua began with himself: "As for me and my house." We cannot too strongly express the truth that, for godly training, the first and the most essential requirement is personal con-

... "CHRISTIAN HOME" CON'T ON PAGE 2

“The Emptiness of Riches”

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

Matthew 19:16

After a meeting with a rich young man, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19:23) The Lord emphasized his point with the observation that it would be harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. By this, Jesus was probably referring to a small side entrance in the wall of Jerusalem, which was used when the main gate was closed.

Jesus' observation completely stunned His disciples who, desiring the advance of religion, genuinely welcomed the religious affections of the wealthy.

The rich young man felt sure he was keeping the whole of the law. Perhaps he made many great offerings. He was obviously a religious man. He knelt down before Jesus (Mark 10:17) and rightly called Him "Good Master". He inquired about eternal life. Sadly enough, his riches constituted an idol in his heart and earned disqualification from heaven.

The idol of riches can subtly find its way into the heart, and is a trap for many. The thought that the work of God is done by the American dollar or the British pound, is another manifestation of this idol.

To stake his claim in the kingdom of God, Peter responded, "Behold, we have forsaken all." (Matt. 19:27) Can we make such a claim? It is definitely possible for a rich man to forsake everything: we have

Abraham for an example. Riches was not a problem at all for him; he was not fixated by it. However, today many people are simply enthralled by money, from the rich to the poor.

We can hold retreats and revival meetings - that is not hard at all. But after some time, these spiritual exercises can degenerate into a routine. Shallow Christians just grieve me: people who know the Word, seem to be pretty good, but shed no tears for souls.

It is apparent that even some of our best are not equal to the enormous challenges we are facing now. With the rise in the number of centres comes an increase in the demands on our faith. Head knowledge is in abundant supply, but faith is a rare commodity.

Unfortunately, some young men we send out are succumbing to the terrible attacks of the devil. The devil snipes from every angle by every means possible. He aims for nothing less than the destruction of our witness and our person. We must resist him.

"Many that are first shall be last" (Matt. 19:30). We began by majoring in the setting of Biblical standards, particularly with regard to the sacred testimony of our families. The devil will want to concentrate on that area. God has given us sufficient light to be pace-setters, and to stay ahead; but the devil wants us to finish last.

Let us be alert and sober, and repulse every device of the devil. In the main things, the essential things, let us be worthy of the high calling of God.

—Joshua Daniel

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secration.

It is good to reflect on our responsibility, to speak with our children, and to pray for them - but all these are only accessories. The first thing on the part of the parent is a life devoted to God and His service. This alone creates the spiritual atmosphere the children are to breathe. This drives the performance of our religious duties. This ennobles our dealings with our children and imparts spiritual influence. This gives our praying and our working its value with God.

"As for me" - there must be no hesitation or half-heartedness in our confession of devotion to God's service. As often as we pray for God's blessing on our children, we must be in the spirit of David: "Now therefore let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant." (1 Chron. 17:27) With God and men, in the home and out of it, as well as in the hearts of parents themselves, it must be a settled thing: "As for me, I will serve the Lord."

Consecrate Your Family

Take your stand for all who belong to you: "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

There are religious parents who do not understand that this is their duty and their privilege. They do not understand what God has put under their power and control. They think they are honouring God by thrusting the business of keeping family members pure and holy, to God's "sovereign" will. They are so occupied, either with the activities of this life or with religious

work, that they cannot find the time for speaking and acting out the grand decision:

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Perhaps the father leaves the religion of the children to the care of the mother, and the mother thinks that the father as head is more responsible.

There is no clear and definite understanding, and the spiritual education of their children loses the prominent place that it ought to occupy in the parents' relationship.

Let each believing parent receive Joshua's words, first, in the depth of his own soul, then in fellowship with marriage partner and children.

In our prayers and conversations, we must stress that our house is holy to the Lord. Our children must be trained first of all for God and His service. The more we affirm this belief, the more this principle will assert itself and guide our household to serve the Lord.

Serve The Lord

The words of Joshua teach us that our consecration to God must be practical: "We will serve the Lord."

There are many parents who view Christianity only in terms of salvation, and not in terms of service. They pray most earnestly that all their children

may be saved. Even if their children spend their lives in the service of the world, such parents manage to comfort themselves with the idea that they will yet be saved before they die. It is no wonder when the children are spiritually lost.

These parents have never understood the truth, and have never taught their children to understand, that a life in God's service is the fullest salvation.

God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;

that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18:19)

Remember God's words in connection with Israel's deliverance from Egypt:

"Let My people go that they may serve Me." (Exod. 8:1) Recall Pharaoh's reply, "Go ye, serve the LORD; ... let your little ones also go with you." (Exod. 10:24) The Holy Spirit has spoken, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 14)

All redemption is geared towards service, and all service springs forth from redemption. God does not want to be worshipped without being served. The glory of heaven will be that "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3). So let our lives and our homes be consecrated to serving God.

—Andrew Murray

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- ☐ INDIA: 9-B, Nungambakkam High Road, Behind Hotel Ranjith, Madras 34
- ☐ USA: LEFI, P.O. Box 14, South Lyon Michigan, 48178
Phone - (248) 446-3080
- ☐ CANADA: P.O. Box 31002 Windsor Ont. N9G2Y2,
Phone - (519) 966-4603
- ☐ SINGAPORE: P.O. Box 320, PSA Building Post Office, Singapore 911141, Phone - (65) 63562724
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“You Are Not Your Own”

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall have it.” Luke 9:24

Jesus Christ is speaking a great truth here. The maxims of the Bible are contrary to the maxims of the world. If anyone wants to be exalted he

must humble himself. If anyone wants to be filled with grace and power, he must first die. If anyone wants to be wise, he must first become a fool.

The sermon on the mount is the natural outcome of a regenerate life, developed fully. It is simply wonderful how Jesus states things that are going to be your experience. Unfortunately we do not take God at His Word. Hence we do not see the fruit. If people do not believe in humbling themselves and confessing their sins, how can they see such fruit? But if we are truly born of the Spirit, we will find that all that are God’s are ours and all ours are God’s. God will be in you and you in God. How happy you will feel when all your children belong to God! Why do people hesitate to give their children to God? They do not accept the fact that their children belong to God anyway and not to themselves and they have no claim on them more than God has.

I Corinthians 6:19, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of

the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” We are not our own. Do you know that your body is not yours? Then you will know how to adorn it, when you go to worship God. Your face is not yours. Is your face acceptable before God? When you wash your heart with the Word of God, heavenly beauty will come into your face. I saw a woman whose face was shining. On speaking to her I learnt her heart was changed. You are not your own. It is a great step in spiritual life to know you are not your own. If you have not come to that level

I Corinthians 6:19, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

you must repent. Many mothers are to blame for the illness and the sufferings of their children. It is because they do not come to the place of knowing they are not their own. The time is coming when you are going to throw away your body and your dresses. You are not your own. You think that house is yours. No, it is not. To the extent you use it for God’s glory it is yours. You have built a house but you will not occupy it for long because you think it is your own. Saul thought the throne was his own. He lost it.

I Chron.17:27, “Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, LORD, and it shall be blessed for ever.” He wanted God to bless Solomon. He asked Solomon not to depend on anything except seeking God with a perfect heart. Hence the kingdom was retained by David. He that loseth his life, he that loseth his property, he that loseth his bigness shall gain them. How glorious it is when we give up our all to God. What a great confidence you will have in God when you feel all those that are in your house and all the things in your house belong to God.

—N. Daniel

“The Genuine Salt of Humility”

Humiliation of soul always brings a positive blessing with it. If we empty our hearts of self, God will fill them with His love. He who desires close communion with Christ should remember the word of the Lord, ‘To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word?’ Stoop if you would climb to heaven. Do we not say of Jesus, “He descended that He might ascend?” So must you. You must grow downwards, that you may grow upwards; for the sweetest fellowship with heaven is to be had by humble souls, and by them alone. God will deny no blessing to a thoroughly humbled spirit. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” with all its riches and treasures.

The whole exchequer of God shall be made over by deed of gift to the soul which is humble enough to be able to receive it without growing proud because of it. God blesses us all up to the full measure and extremity of what it is

REALITY CHECK!

“FINALLY, BRETHREN, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE HONEST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT; IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS.” PHILIPPIANS 4:8

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safe for Him to do. If you do not get a blessing, it is because it is not safe for you to have one.

If our heavenly Father were to let your unhumiliated spirit win a victory in His holy war, you would pilfer the crown for yourself, and meeting with a fresh enemy you would fall a victim; so that you are kept low for your own safety. When a man is sincerely humble, and never ventures to touch so much as a grain of the praise, there is scarcely any limit to what God will do for him. Humility makes us ready to be blessed by the God of all grace, and fits us to deal efficiently with our fellow men. True humility is a flower which will adorn any garden. This is a sauce with which you may season every dish of life, and you will find an improvement in every case. Whether it be prayer or praise, whether it be work or suffering, the genuine salt of humility cannot be used in excess.

—C.H. Spurgeon

“Love in Discipline”

My friend and associate, Cliff Barrows, told me this story about bearing punishment. He recalled the time when he took the punishment for his children when they had disobeyed. “They had done something I had forbidden them to do. I told them if they did the same thing again I would have to discipline them.

When I returned from work and found that they hadn’t minded me, the heart went out of me. I just couldn’t discipline them.”

Any loving father can understand Cliff’s dilemma. Most of us have been in the same position. He continued with the story:

“Bobby and Bettie Ruth were very small. I called them into my room, took off my belt and my shirt, and with a bare back, knelt down at the bed. I made them both strap me with the belt ten times each. You should have heard the crying! From them, I mean! They didn’t want to do it. But I told them the penalty had to

be paid and so through their sobs and tears they did what I told them.”

Cliff smiled when he remembered the incident. “I must admit I wasn’t much of a hero. It hurt. I haven’t offered to do that again, but I never had to spank them again, either, because they got the point. We kissed each other when it was over and prayed together.”

In that infinite way that staggers our hearts and minds, we know that Christ paid the penalty for our sins, past, present, and future. That is why He died on the cross.

—Billy Graham

“Born of the Spirit”

“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.” (Romans 8:9)

The wife of a reputable gentleman, known throughout his home town, had heard an address by the preacher, John Seeger. Moved emotionally, she told her husband back at home what an impressive sermon he had preached. Her conclusion was: “If Seeger is right, then we are both lost eternally.” Her husband replied, “I want to see the one who dares to deprive me of my salvation.” His wife then retorted, “If you had heard Seeger, you would have formed a very different opinion of yourself.” - “Well, I’ll give him a chance,” he answered, “I’ll invite him to dinner.”

Not long after Seeger accepted the invitation. The master of the house had taken care that in Seeger’s presence everything was quiet, orderly and “Christian-like”. After the meal he asked, “Mr. Seeger, you have seen how things are in my household. Tell me, can I get to heaven in this way?” Seeger replied, “Sir, there is plenty of coal, but the fire is lacking.” And with these words he took his leave.

There are undoubtedly countless persons who lead an upright life. One can see that the “coal” is there, but what is missing is the fire.

Everyone who acknowledges himself to be lost, sincerely repents and puts his faith in the atoning work of the Son of God receives the Spirit of Christ. And that is what ignites the “coal” as far as God is concerned.

“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:3,6)

“Everyone who acknowledges himself to be lost, sincerely repents and puts his faith in the atoning work of the Son of God receives the Spirit of Christ.”

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Angell Hall, Room G-144
Call (248) 446-3009
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Call (519) 966-4603
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