

## GOD IN THE HOME

The item directly below is from a discourse in PEOPLES PULPIT, by Pastor Russell, Vol. IV, #1, P.4)

*“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”—Joshua 24:15*

We do not teach that the world’s opportunity for life everlasting or death everlasting is now. “God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world,” grant the world a judgment or trial or test. That great Day is future. It is the Day of Christ, a thousand years long. It will be a glorious opportunity. Present right doing and right thinking, or wrong doing and wrong thinking will have much to do with the condition of every man and woman at that time. He or she will enter upon that Day of blessing and opportunity either from a higher or a lower standpoint proportionately as he or she has acted wisely and conscientiously in the present time.

But nothing that the world can do can interfere with God’s great proposition, that a full opportunity for life or death eternal shall then come to every member of the race because Christ died for the ungodly. The only class to whom present life means life or death eternal is the Church. And by the Church we mean, not church attendants nor outward professors, but those who have entered into a covenant with God through Christ and who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasting of the good Word of God and the powers of the Age to come. If these should fall away, the Apostle forewarns us, it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. And there will be no hope for them with the world, in the world’s trial Day, because they already have enjoyed their share of the merit of Christ’s death.

When therefore, we speak of God and the home, we are not having in mind a family composed exclusively of saints, who daily and hourly are following their great Redeemer’s footsteps in self-denial, in sacrifice, in the “narrow way” which leads to “glory, honor and immortality” and association with the Redeemer in His glorious reign which will bless the world.

Our thought is that the Bible teaches that there are many people of the world, who are reverential, kind, gentle and just to a very considerable degree, who are not saints; who have not presented their bodies living sacrifices to God; who have not been begotten of His Holy Spirit, who are not, therefore, members of that exclusive “little flock” to whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the Kingdom—in joint-heirship with their Lord and Redeemer and Head. To this latter class our Master evidently referred when He said to His footstep followers, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 5:16.

To live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world to the extent of one's ability is what every one should do—no less. To live a life of sacrifice—to lay down our lives for the brethren, for the truth, in the service of the Lord, is another matter, which justice does not require and which the Bible nowhere enjoins upon mankind. It is pointed out as a privilege to those who desire it, and glory, honor and immortality on the spirit plane is the reward attached to this invitation or High Calling. It is the selection of this special class of consecrated ones that is the particular order of the Divine program at the present time.

### **Saint and Sinner Interested**

Having clearly defined what we do not mean to teach, let us now assert that, nevertheless, every sensible man and woman, saintly or not, must feel a deep interest in the welfare and moral progress of the human family, of which he forms a part. All, therefore, should rejoice in every movement and endeavor working to even temporary enlightenment, blessing and uplift amongst mankind. The many benevolent institutions of the civilized world attest this general thought. Our only conflict with these humanitarian efforts is that they do not approach the subject of human betterment from what we consider to be the right standpoint. With nearly all of these efforts, more or less distinctly stated, are those God-dishonoring and love-opposing intimations of an alternative of torment, either purgatorial or eternal. This is the great blight which has worked and is working incalculable harm—driving intelligent minds into opposition to the true God and the Bible, which is the revelation of His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power.

The Bible freely tells us that many features of the divine plan are now hidden in mystery, but the last book of the Bible, which prophetically pictures the future, assures us that in God's due time "The mystery shall be finished, which He hath declared to His servants, the prophets" (Rev. 10:7). The same book assures us that in God's due time, when the mystery is cleared, "All nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15:4). We are now living in the time when the "mystery" is ending and the righteous dealings of God, from the Scriptural standpoint, may be clearly seen.

But these revelations are not meant for the world in general now, but merely for "the elect," the "sanctified in Christ Jesus." "To you it is given to know the mysteries"; to outsiders these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings (Matt. 13:11, 13). But not until the elect shall be glorified and the Messianic Kingdom established will the "mystery" be made fully known to the world and every knee bow and every tongue confess. Hence, only those of a contrite heart may now see, now understand, the real character of God, His real purposes toward man, etc. Thus our Lord declared, "This is

life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”—John 17:3.

In a darker day than ours the theory, “to doubt is to be damned,” held such a power over many that they dared not use their reason. And thus a certain reverence for God was maintained in many homes—a reverence, however, which surely would not be as highly appreciated by the Creator nor have as deep an influence upon the creature as would a faith moved by love and an intelligent appreciation of the divine character, based upon an understanding of the Divine Plan of the Ages.

### **An Inundation of Unbelief**

In our day the shackles of ignorance and superstition are breaking. Men, women and children are beginning to think for themselves. They no longer believe the fairy tales of other days; the dreadful hobgoblins and nightmares of the Dark Ages respecting purgatory and eternal torture are doubted by all, and by the great mass totally disbelieved. What have they now to attach them to the Almighty, since they have never been taught the love of God—the lengths and breadths and heights and depths passing all human understanding? This is the world’s great need—to know God as He really is, a Father, a Friend, a God of love! And to thus know Him the people need to be taught how seriously they were mistaught in the past along the lines of hell and purgatory.

How could they ever truly love and worship a God of injustice and of hate—One inferior to themselves—One who knew, foreordained and prepared for their torture, before they were born? They must see that these things, taught by the creeds of the Dark Ages, are wholly at variance with the Bible, else they will never come back to the Bible nor be able to see its teachings in their true light. They must be taught that the sin and death, sorrow and trouble all around us are the wage or penalty of father Adam’s disobedience. They must learn that God proposes a blessing and uplifting which will be as world wide as is the curse. They must learn that the foundation for this work was effected by the death of Jesus, the Just for the unjust. They must learn that God is now selecting a saintly class to be associates with the Redeemer in the work of uplifting and blessing Adam and his race; and that each will be held responsible and receive stripes in proportion to his knowledge and willful disobedience; and that the persistently rebellious will be destroyed “like the natural brute beasts” in the Second Death.

### **“I Have Lost My God”**

Not long since, in conversation with a young lady, she said with great concern, “I fear that I have lost my God.” As a child of religious parents she had had helpful influences in her home, but in school she had come in contact with the general spirit of skepticism, which, instead of repudiating the Bible, as did Ingersoll, Paine and Voltaire, merely

smiles at any reference to a Divine revelation, a faith in God and a respect for His will. These teachers are as honest, we believe, as were Ingersoll, Paine and Voltaire; nor can we deny that they have the same right to their disbelief that we claim for our belief. We can, however, say with all sincerity that it is a great pity that the learned men of Christendom are nearly all infidels, in the sense of not believing in the Bible as a Divine revelation.

Many of them even deny that there is a personal God and ascribe everything to—a great Nothing, which they designate Nature-god. Is it surprising, in view of the fact that these teachings are being promulgated in the universities and colleges and theological seminaries, in the high schools, and even to some extent in the common schools—is it any wonder that the rising generation is losing its God? If it even be claimed that a bad thing is better lost than kept, we must dissent from their course. We must claim that the misconception of God can be destroyed only by the introduction to the heart and mind of the true God, whose glorious attributes of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power will take the place of the malevolent misconceptions of the Dark Ages.

### **Awakened Parental Responsibility**

It is high time that parents realize the true situation—it is almost too late now. The seeds of unbelief, already sown in the minds of the rising generation, are being watered continually and are growing. All who love their families, all who love mankind in general, should awaken to the fact that a world that has lost its God must of necessity be an unhappy world. Platonic philosophy may for a time serve the purposes of the few, but surely cannot serve the masses of the human race.

A godless world will ere long mean a discontented world, an unhappy world and, by and by, a world of anarchy and strife. This is what our worldwide education is leading to. Few of our race can stand an education which recognizes no God, no revelation of Him, no responsibility to Him, and no hope of a future life which will be effected by the conduct of the present.

### **God in the Home**

We are not pleading for cant and rant. We are urging that in every home God be recognized to the extent of the opportunities and influence we enjoy. Parents have a special responsibility. Every father, in particular, as the head of his family, should recognize the Almighty Creator, and hold Him up to the family—“God First!” We need not urge upon God’s consecrated people the privileges of prayer and the blessed influence which comes through prayer to the younger members of the family. This is one way of putting “God First.” “In all thy ways acknowledge Him,” or, as Joshua said: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Let us now step into your home and measure things there by the Golden Rule. As husbands, how do you treat your wives? As wives, how do you treat your husbands? Can you apply the Golden Rule to your words, to your conduct, to your demands of each other? Or do you act meanly, selfishly, taking advantage of each other, to the limit that the other will forbear? Do you deal with your children according to your own advanced standard of what a parent's duty should be to his children?

Do you remember that you have a responsibility so far as your circumstances will permit, for their environment and happiness and education and general preparation for usefulness in life? Or are you indifferent to their interests, neglectful of your responsibilities? Do you recognize that your children have certain rights and that these increase as they near maturity, or are you forgetful of these, disposed to keep the children under the restraint of childhood, souring their dispositions and making them unhappy, until they resent the injustice and a family quarrel results?

As children, are you thoughtful of your parents, their welfare, their wishes, their happiness, as you would like your children to be thoughtful of yours? Do you remember the hours and weeks of feebleness and sickness, and the toil which you cost them in your infancy, and are you seeking to repay those kindnesses and seeking to make their last days the happiest of their lives? Are you observing the Golden Rule toward your parents?

How is it in your relationship to your brothers and sisters? When they borrow your things without leave, do you retaliate by borrowing theirs without leave, and thus keep up a continual fret and vexation of spirit in the family? Or do you practice the Golden Rule of justice and do nothing to your brother and sister, or their belongings, that you would not wish them to do to you or your things?

### **“Love Worketh No Ill”**

All of the Lord's people are to love Him and the brethren; yes, even their enemies. However, let us now stop short of love and merely consider what the simple justice of the Golden Rule would imply in our conduct. How do our daily lives square with this Golden Rule of absolute justice, omitting love entirely?

If you are an employer, do you treat your employee in harmony with this rule and do unto him as you would have him do unto you, if your positions were reversed? If you are an employee, inquire of yourself, “Do I treat my employer and his business as I would have him treat me and my business, if your relationship were reversed?” Do you treat your butcher, your baker, your grocer, etc., as you would like to have them treat you, if

your positions were reversed? Are you polite to them and not inclined to give them unnecessary trouble? Do you pay them promptly?

Or if you are the tradesman, do you treat your customers as you would wish to have them treat you, if conditions were reversed? Do you charge them a reasonable price only? Do you give them proper weight and measure? Do you properly represent your goods to them, as you would have them represented to you?

Are you a good neighbor? Do you see to it that your children are not a nuisance to others; that your chickens are not permitted to damage your neighbor's garden; that your dog is not a ferocious one; and that his bark does not keep the neighborhood awake? In a word, do you treat your neighbor justly, along the lines of the Golden Rule, doing unto him only as you would wish him to do to you?

He who is faithful in little things will be faithful in the greater ones. He who practices the Golden Rule during the six days of the contact with business will surely be faithful on the seventh, but faithfulness to the Golden Rule on one day only will never win Divine approval.

In no way can we better honor and show our reverence for God than by following to the best of our ability His commands, which are just and righteous altogether.

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### **“FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND”**

(Phil. 3:13)

Let us learn the wise art of “forgetting”  
The sins and the sorrows behind;  
The things which forever are getting  
Unhappily near, through the mind.

Let us learn the safe art of “forgetting”  
Those things which can never be undone;  
No good can arise from mere fretting,  
While God can transform them—each one.

Let us learn the high art of “forgetting”  
The wrongs and injustice we've known,  
Instead of just selfishly letting  
These linger, 'til greater they've grown.

Let us learn the blest art of “forgetting;”

A forward engagement is ours:  
Courageously, steadfastly setting  
To what we may win, all our powers!

—From Bro. & Sister Sundbom, May 19, 1959.