

Are We Genuine Christians?

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." The Captain of our salvation made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, in order that humanity might be allied to divinity. Man is to represent Christ. He is to be long-suffering toward his fellow-men, to be patient, forgiving, and full of Christlike love. He who is truly converted will manifest respect for his brethren; he will do as Christ has commanded. Jesus said, *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* Where the love of Christ abounds in the soul, there will be an expression of that love that will be understood by the world.

God would express his character in humanity; but the attributes of Christ can only be revealed through those who labor in love for the souls for whom Christ has died. God has given power to the human agent, which makes him accountable for the impressions which he makes on the minds of his fellow-men. I cannot say it is well with you when you have little concern as to what kind of impression you are making upon the minds and the characters of those with whom you associate. Those who work in a reckless, careless manner, and have no concern as to what becomes of those whom they deem to be erring, have false ideas as to what constitutes Christianity. Jesus says, *"Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

Not all who name the name of Christ are one with Christ. Those who do not have the Spirit and the grace of Christ are none of his, no matter what may be their profession. By their fruits ye shall know them. The customs and practices that are after the order of the world do not carry out the principles of God's law, and therefore do not breathe of his Spirit nor express his character. Christlikeness will be revealed only by those who are assimilated to the divine image. Only those who are being molded through the operation of the Holy Spirit are doers of the word of God, and express the mind and the will of God. There is counterfeit Christianity in the world as well as genuine Christianity. The true spirit of a man is manifested by the way in which he deals with his fellow-man. We may ask the question, Does he represent the character of Christ in spirit and action, or simply manifest the natural, selfish traits of character that belong to the people of this world? Profession weighs nothing with God. Before it is everlastingly too late for wrongs to be righted, let each one ask himself, "What am I?" It depends upon ourselves as to whether we shall form such characters as will constitute us members of God's royal family above.

If we would become Christlike, we must study Christ's character. God has given capabilities to the human agent by which he is to co-operate with God, in blessing, uplifting, strengthening, and ennobling, not himself only, but others with whom he associates. This work of blessing others we shall do by giving men an example in our own lives of the spirit, ways, and works of Christ. When self controls, it works to discourage, to dishearten, and to drive souls away from their Saviour. Christ says, *"He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."*

It is necessary that we should closely examine ourselves, and inquire, Is this Christ's way? Would Christ pursue this course of action? What kind of impression am I leaving upon the minds of those with whom I am connected? Shall I pursue a course of action that will weaken the confidence of any one with whom I deal, and cause him to think lightly of the Christianity that I profess? Shall I be uncourteous, unchristlike, unmerciful toward the purchase of the blood of Christ? I would speak words of warning to the brethren of our churches; for I fear that many are acting the part of the slothful servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth. His sin was the sin of neglect, the sin of failing to improve the great treasures of knowledge that were committed to his trust.

God has given precious light to his people with which to enlighten the world, and are not many treating it with indifference, and acting as though the heavenly gift was of little consequence? Christ said, *"Ye are the light of the world."* Who did he mean were the light of the world?--He meant those who are following in his footsteps. He says, *"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* It is those who are branches of the living Vine, who bear much fruit. They are sustained by the nourishment that flows from the parent stock. Those who abide in Christ will have the same spirit that he manifested, and be actuated by the same motives, and be pure, peaceable, and undefiled, yet they will be as burning and shining lights amid the moral darkness of the world.

Fair-weather disciples will not answer to the Lord's call in the time of peril toward which we are hastening. It will take those who not only hear but do the words of Christ, to be active disciples, *"not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."* A new energy proceeding from beneath is taking possession of the whole synagogue of Satan; and a new life descending from Heaven is taking possession of every human agent who is consecrated, devoted, and who is seeking to work the works of God. The Lord can do great things through simple instrumentalities when they are devoted to his service. The Lord said to Moses, *"What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand."*

Let those who minister in word and doctrine mix faith with earnest prayer, and seek to put to use every ray of light that comes from the written word. The voice of God calls from heaven and demands the use of every intrusted capability. Every talent is to be used to its uttermost. If ever there was a time when men and women should have an assurance that they are co-partners with Christ in the saving of the world, it is now. Ask yourself, Am I a faithful steward of the grace of God? Am I burying the light, failing to improve the talent that has been lent me to trade upon? The way in which we use God's intrusted capability is deciding our own future destiny, and settling the question as to whether or not we shall be intrusted with greater gifts, even with eternal riches.

Precious light is shining in order that we all may become doers of the word of Christ, and may diffuse the light of truth to others. As you see the standard of what you ought to be set before you, review your past experience, and remember that whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* For Christ's sake your sins may be forgiven, and may go beforehand to judgment to be *"blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."* But do not sleep now on the very brink of the eternal world. Obtain the experience where you will hate the things which you once loved, and love that which you once hated; where you will count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Do not live a life of uncertainty. *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. . . . Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation."* Every human agent knows for himself whether his feet are tending toward the city of our God, or tending toward the darkness of the shadow of death. There are many who claim to be Christians who are as spurious coin. They are traveling in the broad road of selfishness and sin. But he who rests upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, who has received Christ by faith, has the promise that he is the son of God. *"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* As sons of God, we are partakers of the divine nature. We know what true light is, and know the power of the grace of Christ. We have the faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

~Mrs. E. G. White
Review and Herald, April 9, 1895