



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

Volume 2, No. 8

Issue # 208

Sanctified Music Interests

I would like to look at what I call sanctified music interests. Singing is a big part of our faith and practice. Yet, there are a lot of things that are coming into the music “scene” that can affect each and every one of us. God’s people have always been a singing people. We see that throughout the Scriptures — singing, lifting our voices to the Lord. We sing a hymn, *Come We That Love the Lord* and we say,

“Then let our songs abound, as we are marching through Emmanuel’s ground and heading on to Zion.” Singing, singing as we are going. It is a big part of our life. Hearing people singing in the home, or at work, is an encouragement to us. It lifts our spirits and theirs. It makes us think that as we are singing songs to the Lord. There is something right, something good, and something uplifting with that.

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Music is communication. We are communicating when we use music. It is an expression of what is in our hearts. Therefore, our music should make our minds focus on God. We need to ask ourselves, “What does my music say about my Christian walk? Does my music, which I listen to or sing, prepare me to meet the Lord?”

Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and

admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Is that not what our music should be? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Does our music match up to that? “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” I think this defines what our music interests should be. The word of Christ — the grace of God in our hearts.

Our spiritual lives and the

Vol. 2 No. 8, Issue #208. The Pulpit Exchange is a compilation of written sermons without commentary, published as often as possible, in the interests of promoting sound preaching in our conservative Anabaptist churches. All sermons have been transcribed and printed with permission. Names are removed so that we can focus on the message and content rather than on a certain speaker or style. (Names will be published in the next issue).

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Published by Door of Peace Publications/Les Éditions «Porte-de-Paix» a conservative Amish Mennonite/Anabaptist publisher
c/o Keith G. White, P.O. Box 104, Blyth, Ontario Canada N0M 1H0

Cost per Issue \$4.95 + \$2.50 p& h Canada/ \$3.50 p& h USA

songs that we sing, and listen to are linked together. We cannot separate them. Spiritual music promotes spiritual living. We cannot separate the two. The Devil is trying to use everything he can to divert our focus from God and to divert us on our Christian walk. Music is one of his big tools. He uses many things. He uses fear, dress, discouragement, but he also uses music. Music is one of his powerful tools. There was an early Chinese ruler named Su Ching who said, "For changing people's manners, and altering their customs there is nothing better than music." This was a worldly ruler. He wanted to win the hearts and minds of his people and change their manners and customs. He said, "Music is the way to do it." That is why we need to be looking at our music today very carefully.

Music plays on our emotions. The military uses music. They use drums. The Scots used bagpipes and drums as they went into battle. They used music to get themselves emotionally charged and to bring fear to the enemy. They worked on the emotions of the troops. Therefore, we need to be on our guard. We must combat the inroads of the wrong type of music into our lives.

Ephesians 5:19 says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This should dictate what sort of music we listen to and what sort of music we sing. I do not claim to be any kind of music expert. I did not really have the training in the public school system. However, I have appreciated the music as we have come to the church.

I will look a little bit at music — some of the basic rudiments. Music combines sounds and tones to form a melody and a harmony which in turn forms an emotionally expressive way to communicate. Remember, music is communicating. We are always communicating are we not? We are communicating with each other right now. I am communicating by speaking and you are communicating by your facial expression while you are sitting. I can see a lot of you. You can only see a couple of us in front, but we are always communicating, and music is one way that we communicate.

The melody is an arrangement of pleasing sounds. Harmony is a combination of parts into a pleasing or orderly whole. Music is one of the many wonders which God has created, and I feel

that our music is intended to be a spiritual blessing to us. The songs we sing in worship are a blessing to us. When we go to large gatherings, whether a funeral or wedding, those songs lift us. In some buildings we have good acoustics. We could make a joyful noise sound very good. At one wedding they used a large church which held 1,500 people and was full and they had seats in the back. Yet, the singing sounded bad because it was all dead inside. They had cushioning all over, so to speak, which I guess, absorbed the sound. It was not a really moving experience as it could have been. The songs were however very moving. Sometimes when we are sitting together and singing we know what it does to us. It is a tremendous feeling.

Music can lift our spirits to God. It can effectively get a message through to our hearts. How many times have the songs which we sang on Sunday, when we are working on Monday, all of a sudden that comes to mind and we start singing that over and over again. Music enters our minds, affects our thoughts, and ideals, and it affects the way we live our lives. It is like in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And 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." The threefold nature of man — spirit, soul and body — are affected by music.

First there are the words (the lyrics). They relate to our spirit. In our heart (the seat of worship to God) the words touch us and affect our hearts. The tune, which is a succession of musical tones forming a rhythmic, catchy whole relates to our soul. The tone relates to our soul. It is the realm of the mind and the emotional nature of man. Lastly, we have the rhythm which is defined as basically the regular recurrence of grouped strong and weak beats or heavily and lightly accented tones. This relates to the body — the physical side of us — the part of man which functions through the five senses of smell, touch, taste, hearing and seeing.

Sometimes we can hear some people coming in their cars half a mile away because of the thumping — the boom, boom, boom. I wonder what those people are like, and I see sometimes when they get out of the car. They are moving — still moving in the car and they are bouncing, bouncing, bouncing. That is that rhythm that strong beat which is affecting the sensual part of man. It is affecting the body. Do they listen

to the words? Do they hear the words? I am not sure, but the rhythm is the part that really works on the body.

Therefore, as we look at the threefold parts of man and the parts of a song, we need to know what are we singing. What are we listening to? Most of the time there is a kind of a chanting set of words when they pull up next to us. Our whole vehicle is vibrating but we hear this chanting set of words. [It is called “Rap” Music]. Do they know what they are listening to? Does that young man, who gets out of that car with a big heavy bass beat, know what the song is saying, or are they being affected by the beat?

We must be careful because music (as I said) will lift us to God or it will destroy our spiritual life. We can say, “I will not be like that person with the big speakers and that heavy bass beat in there,” but what are we listening to? 1 Peter 2:11 says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” Music is not neutral. A lot of people like to think music is merely neutral. It is simply something that is there. I do not believe that. It is either good or bad for us. There is no neutral ground on music. It is either building us up, lifting us

up, or bringing us down.

Music can lift us to God, but music can satisfy the desires of the flesh. Therefore, it becomes carnal. It can dull our vision of the holiness of God by bringing Him down to a lower level. Some of the songs that I have heard, I do not know if you want to call them blasphemous, but they are disrespectful. They are bringing God or Jesus Christ down more to our level. I think some of the songs that people are listening to today can dull the reality of eternal judgment. Some of the songs about heaven, are simply so bouncy and then they dull our senses. That is what the devil wants. He wants us to feel comfortable here, and not thinking about the eternal consequences of our actions.

This music can hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:5–9 and 13 says. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the

Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. . . For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

We must mortify the deeds of the body and that might be music. It might be saying “No,” to certain types of music. I think that man becomes like the music to which he listens. The young man or young woman with the pounding beat — they dress and act in a certain way. It has affected how they live. You become like it. There are people who listen to Country and Western music who might never have been near a horse, yet they have a huge cowboy hat and cowboy boots. Some of the people out where we live kind of laugh at that but there are a lot people who have had nothing to do with any kinds of livestock but yet are into Country and Western music. It affects how they dress. Some of these people, who listen to some of this really nasty rock music, dress in a certain way. It is because it has become a part of them.

When we have sanctified music interests, it will become part of us. It will build up the things which we stand for, and not tear them down. It will not

push us off into other areas.

So why the concern? We have wonderful hymnals. We sing congregationally. We come together and sing, and it lifts our souls and spirits to God. We think about it. What about some of the things that are making the inroads into the Christian music “scene” today? I call it contemporary worship and praise singing. It is coming into the Christian music scene. Some of us have seen it in the churches that we came from. They are happy and bouncing songs. A lot of them use overheads and that sort of thing, and it is coming into churches. Simply because a song has a Christian or Gospel label attached to it does not mean it is right. Sometimes these songs have these labels attached to them to make them more attractive and acceptable. It is a plot of the Devil.

I had to think of a flyer that came in the mail a few years ago. Along the Colombia River to the west of us, there is a big amphitheatre. They have big rock festivals there. This flyer was advertising a week long Christian Rock festival. Looking at the pictures of those groups and those people was appalling. To think that they would even be called the children of God. Yet that is some of the people who

are making this music which people are listening to. There is a tendency to try to mix the worldly and sensual into these songs. They are trying to do that and bring some of that in. We know that God and the world do not mix. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God." (James 4:4)

1 John 2:15–17 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." *There is a mixing here.* It is interesting to see the way it goes because some of the people who were Christian musicians back in the 70's and '80's, when I would have thought about these things, are now into mainline music, and there is a whole new group coming up. It seems like a lot of these groups start to move as they start to get into this contemporary worship and praise. Why? Because it sells. Because people want to hear it.

Young people, and maybe some adults of today, want that the sensual part of that. It is

catchy. It is a tune that makes you tap your foot. This mix of Christian and worldly is, I think, producing a tremendous threat to us today. It is not that those people "out there." Those people "without" — they are listening to it, but it is preying on the people in our churches. It will rob us of our spiritual vitality. I really appreciate the music in our churches, having been in a church for five years that had contemporary worship and praise, and coming to a church which sings the hymns out of the hymnal. The hymns which are written by Isaac Watts, Fanny Crosby and others, do much for each and every one of us. We do not want to lose this.

What are some of the things that I mean when I talk about this contemporary worship and praise? One is casual lyrics. These are lyrics that are less than serious. There is the repetition of phrases and choruses that are sung over, and over, and over. Remember what that Chinese ruler said. This is how we will change people. You do it by saying the same thing over, and over, and over. The lyrics and choruses kind of stick with us as they are repeated. Also, songs that are sung with catchy tunes or heavy beats. There are old hymns that are what I call (for want of a bet-

ter term) “fixed up.” I have heard some old hymns that we cannot even recognize if we listen to some of those contemporary worship and praise singing. They have changed it so much. I never knew these hymns could be sung in so many different ways. But they can be and they twist them. Why? They are trying to meet the desires of a worldly audience. Some of these performers are simply like other people. They like the attention. If we make something, do we not want to sell it? If we take all this effort to make a tape or CD these days do we not want to sell it? Do we not want people to buy it? If this is what appeals to people, we will drift that way.

Some of the groups that we hear on recorded music have embellished their voices. We cannot do it in a congregational setting. We could not sound that way. I remember riding with a couple of brothers. One of the brothers said, “Here, listen to this song. What do you think?” It was very professional, and very good but, without the aid of electronics, no one could sound that way. There are what I call *falsestos*. These are men singing very, very high. This is what is it doing. It is attracting attention to the singer. There are some very, very deep basses. I wonder how

we can do that? They play that up. There is an electronic blending of voices. They blend them in such a way, and again, they are using machines to do it. There are solos for every part that is sung. What is that doing? It is bringing attention to the singer and to that part. We start to think, “We need to have this in our singing.” Then they can fade away at the end of the song. We cannot do that here, but they can kind of fade out. We are listening and then all of a sudden they are gone. Again, they do this electronically.

There is an emphasis on the music many times and not the words. It is that catchy tune. Yet, all these take away from our worship of God. They have a tendency to attract our attention to the performers and to the performance and not to the words. I have heard some music that uses voices or clapping to simulate musical instruments. Again, that is appealing to the flesh, our emotions, and our carnal nature. Again, I am not talking outside — someone “down the road.” We may pass a lot of churches on the way to our own. I am not talking about the Lutheran or the Methodist church, or any of those. I am talking about our church. We hear some tapes among our church people that are

less than character building. They are not uplifting and are degrading and pulling us down.

I think we need to ask ourselves, and we can run a couple of tests. We can ask, “Do the feelings that I receive from the music that I am listening to appeal to my flesh? Is that the case? Would the song that I am listening to seem out of place if the chorister on Sunday morning or evening or Wednesday evening led that song? Would it seem out of place? We must ask ourselves that question. Music is so powerful. It sticks with us. It is something that stays with us.

I know of one brother who is now ordained. During the ‘60’s he was in 1W service in a hospital. He was in a ward where they played Country songs all the time. We have talked about this because in that same era I was listening to Rock music. We both said that a lot of those songs are still there. It is very difficult to go into a supermarket today where they are playing old songs. It takes you back to a time when you do not want to think about — a time that you wish were behind you. We are not immune to that at all. Again, this one brother said (and would be more than forty years ago) “I can probably sing a couple of those songs or two if someone wanted me to. I

do not want to, but they are there. They are imbedded.” They have worked their way into his subconscious and they come out.

We need to look at our songs. We need to look at our hymnals, our song books and our recorded music. What are we singing, what are we listening to? We need to ask ourselves that continuously. We must be discerning, because this contemporary worship and praise, is working its way into our groups. There is actually a songbook I believe that is called, *Contemporary Worship and Praise*, or similar. One of the brothers had it at Numidia and we talked about that. He said, “There are some good songs in here, but some songs that are not so good.” How strong are we? Can we say no to the songs that are not so good, and yes to the others ones?”

Some groups start out very good. For instance, there is one that we had in our setting, *Garment of Praise*. Maybe some of their first tapes were not so bad, but now they are getting “slicker,” I guess, and “smoother.” There is the Hallel singers. A lot of the things that I am talking here about we know those are some of the things, songs, singers, and some of the groups that we need to watch. You need to make your own deci-

sions, and look at the tapes and the recorded music that you have.

As you look at that, you need to ask yourselves a series of questions, "Am I using my music for worship, or for entertainment?" Entertainment is defined as amusement for pleasure. Am I getting something out of it? Is it edifying, or am I using it strictly for entertainment? The songs that we sing and the songs that we listen to must come from our heart. They must be edifying to us as individuals and edifying the whole church. Again, it is not something that we want to sing somewhere off by ourselves, because we do not want anyone else to hear it. We worship God for who He is and for what He has done for us. We do not worship Him to make ourselves feel good. We truly do feel good when we worship God, but we are not doing it to make ourselves feel good. I think that a lot of these songs that people listen to today, are there to make us feel good. Again, our deep spiritual worship will bring a feeling of inner peace and joy, but it is because our heart is stayed upon the Lord.

Let us look at 2 Timothy 3:1 and look at some of the characteristics of these perilous times. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

I think many will agree with me, perilous times have come. We are here. We are in perilous times. As we look through this it says, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." As we note particularly the last phrase, is that what our music is doing to us? The songs that make us, or make me feel good could be detrimental to our souls because we are looking at what we are getting out of it. We should think about, "What is my song doing for God?" Are we feeding our own desires and feelings?

If we cannot work, drive, or relax without some form of recorded music playing, I feel this has become an addiction. I think that we are "hooked" on it. I know a lot of people who simply cannot do anything. They must have a headset on or they need to have something playing. By the same token, when we are in the teacher's room at Numidia, when they have chorus and we are studying, one of the things we do is prop the door open, so that

we can listen to that singing because it lifts our spirits. I think it actually helps us study. However, if that were some kind of “bebop” and pounding and the words had no meaning to them, it would be degrading to us. We do not need it all the time. If we need it all the time, I think we ought to sit down and ask ourselves why. What is it doing for me?

Our music cannot take the place of the comfort provided by the Holy Spirit. Good, sound congregational music will help that comfort but it will not replace it. If we are listening without meditating on the message of the songs, then it has become entertainment, rather than worship. The songs are pleasing the flesh and not the spirit. Therefore, we need to be careful and look at that. The flesh wants more music, different music, new tapes, and new CD’s. It says, “This is old. I have heard it. I do not want it anymore.” Have you ever been to that point? We must be careful about that. Sometimes the catchy tunes, or the songs that have deep spiritual meaning, are the ones we want to keep getting. We want to get more and more. Therefore, we need to look at what is the drive. What are we doing? Are we satisfied with these songs. It is true

that if we sing the same song over, and over, and over again, 1) we will really know it well, but 2) we might want to hear something different. Let us not be going out there. Evidently people are buying them because there are always new tapes and CD’s in the Christian bookstores. There are a lot of different things out there.

I said, we will have a series of questions. It is good to give ourselves an exam every once and a while when it comes to our music. *Is my music bringing glory to God?* Does it point a person to God or does it point a person to the singer? Where is the focus? Will the song lift us to God by its message or only give us a temporary boost — only give us a little bit of a rise? Does it help us to focus on God and keep our minds focussed there?

Does my music match up with the character of God? Would Jesus Christ appreciate what we are singing about Him or to Him? Some of these songs that I have heard, cause me to cringe. What does Jesus think about that? It is almost like, “Jesus is my buddy,” and this and that. It is not good. What would Jesus think about the songs that we are singing about Him or to Him?

Does the music inspire one to holiness? To pure speech to pure actions and the like? Some of the

music uses some different slang words. We are left to wonder, is it helping us to lead a life of holiness? Do the songs inspire self-denial and cross-bearing? Or, do they make the Christian life seem easy elevate self? Some of these songs seem to water down the Christian life. They seem to make it seem like it is an easy road. We do know that it is a wonderful road. Why do I like this certain singing group? If we are honest with ourselves, then we will say, "Well, I like it because of the beat, or because of this or that."

Are the words of the song which we are listening to doctrinally correct? Some of these songs are not even doctrinally correct. If we start to think about it, we say, "That is not right. That is not true." Our songs must be Biblical. We must ask, "Do they promote ideas that we would preach over our pulpits or that we would teach in our Sunday School?" Or, do they promote other ideas? Again, it is either lifting us up or pulling us down.

Then, do our songs point sinners to God? If a sinner heard our song, or singing before someone, for example, in a street meeting, will they know that we are ambassadors for Jesus Christ, or will they kind of need to think

. . . If you have ever heard any so-called Christian rock (I think that is a misuse of terms). It is Rock or it is Christian. It is not Christian Rock. That is a very poor use of terms. I think you know what I mean. Some of that is lost. We would never know that this is a Christian song. Think of Acts 16. What were Paul and Silas doing in the jail in Philippi? They were singing. And what happened? That jailer and his family were saved. Were they singing kind of catchy tunes? No, they were singing about the Lord. They were singing hymns that led this man to think, "What do I have to do to be saved?" That is what our singing should be like.

I want to leave some challenges for each and everyone of us. 1) *For parents* — particularly looking at the father's side. (Maybe because I am a father, I am harder on the fathers, but I know the role that I need to fill). Fathers, have a strong conviction with regard to music. Set safe guidelines as to type of music and the amount of time spent listening. The biggest thing for both mothers and fathers is to communicate. Know what your children are listening to. If there is tape or a CD that only comes out when everyone is gone, that should be gone. Your child

should give it to you. Talk to them about it.

Remember the Scriptures say we are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nurture is first. Admonition is second. We do not come at them with that hammer, "Let me see it. I am going to break it." Instead we come to them and say, "Let's talk about this." Talk about it. Ask them why they like it. Maybe you can both grow together in your appreciation of music. Explain to them why you do not want them to have this. There was a good brother friend of mine who is quite direct with people. He was working in wood working shop and was one of the foremen there. There was a tape playing in the tape deck and he walked by, hit the eject button, pulled it out, took a few steps and threw it in the garbage. They knew where he stood on that. I guess he got away with that in the workplace, but do not do that with your children. Talk. Music is communicating. Communicate with our children. Let them know why we have the stand that we do. Help them see that. If we come down with a hammer they may get more tapes and do it in a different way. Have that strong conviction. Share it with your children, and let us build that conviction

together.

2) *The church.* Our churches need to promote personal, family, and congregational singing of sound music. Our schools are no exception. The teachers, the school boards look at the song-books that we are using. Look at the songs that are being brought to school. If someone brings a song to school, let us look at it and analyze it. Is it something we want in our schools or not? Once it gets into the school, then it usually gets into the home and it goes from there. Therefore, let us be diligent. Teachers, school boards, if our homes have a right view of music then those things will not come and we can stop this before it gets too far.

Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." and verse 24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Music is a wonderful gift of God. Having good musical skills is again a gift from God. Let us use them for the glory of God, and not our self glory, nor for anything that appeals to the flesh. Those are challenges.

We know that we are not alone. This is not something new

that we are facing today, because in a song written by Charles Wesley, *Jesus Thou Soul of All Our Joys*, [also called *Jesus, Thou Source of All Our Joys*] verse 4 says,

“Still let us on our guard be found,

And watch against the power of sound,

With sacred jealousy;

Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,

And music’s charms beguile and steal,

Our hearts away from Thee.

That we should turn from Thee.”

It was written in 1749. This

shows us that this has been a problem. It is so true, “Music’s charms beguile and steal our hearts away from Thee. That we should turn from Thee.” Let it not be found among us that music led someone down the wrong path, or that their heart was stolen away from God, while we sat back and did nothing. Let us pray for each other that we will be able to have sanctified music interests and that we will be able to help each other and our children, to have music interests which bring glory and honour to God and not to self.

Scripture References

Romans		Colossians		James	
8:5–9	173	3:16	170	4:4	175
8:13	173				
		1 Thessalonians		1 Peter	
Galatians		5:23	172	2:11	173
5:17	181				
5:24	181	2 Timothy		1 John	
		3:1	178	2:15–17	175
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5:19	171				

From the Previous Issue:

Casual Appearance and Its Influence

From a message by Harold Good

Sunday, September 03, 2000

Centerville Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)
One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 27.

Levitical Ceremonies. — Sacrifices (Continued).

II. Purifications.

1. For cleansing lepers.
 - a. Means of discovering the disease. — Leviticus 13.
 - b. The cleansing process. — Leviticus 14:1–32.
 - c. Care of the house. — Leviticus 14:33–57.

NOTE. — This subject bears careful study, because of its close resemblance of sin, as the following comparisons will show:

1. Leprosy must first be in the system before it becomes visible on the body. Man can not commit sin unless sin dwells within him.
2. Leprosy is liable to make its first appearance on any part of the body. The first outward sin may be lying, swearing, stealing, selfishness, anger, or some other sin.
3. Leprosy is at first scarcely noticeable. The first sins which people commit are usually insignificant.
4. Leprosy continues to spread until the whole body is affected. The longer people remain in sin, the more sinful they become.
5. Leprosy is contagious. So is sin.
6. Leprosy cannot be cured by human aid. Neither can sin. God alone can cure.
7. Leprosy, if not cured by divine aid, will eventually cause death. Sin, if not wiped out by the cleansing power of the blood, results in eternal death.

Notice the care that was taken in getting rid of the disease. Not only was the person himself to be thoroughly examined and cleansed; but even the house was subjected to a similar process. It is not enough that the sinner be cleansed from his sins: but unless his associations are also purified, he is liable to become again polluted with the same foul atmosphere which his former sinful life helped to befoul.

2. For women. — Leviticus 12.
 - a. In the case of a male child (1–4).
 - b. In the case of a female child (5).
 - c. The offering (6–8).

3. For uncleanness of issues. — Leviticus 15.
 - a. In men. (1-12).
 - b. In women (19-27).
 - c. The cleansing (13-18, 28-33).
4. For the day of atonement. — Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:26-32.

III. Consecrations.

1. Of the priests. — Exodus 29; Leviticus 8.
2. Of the Levites. — Numbers 8:5-22.
3. Of the first-born. — Exodus 13: 2,12.
4. Of the great feasts. — Leviticus 23.

NOTE. — A noticeable feature of the consecration services is that there was sacrifice connected with every one of them. May we not conclude that at the present time there can be no consecration without a sacrifice? (See Romans 12:1).

1. Distinguish between the work of Levites and the work of priests.
2. Explain consecration, (1) in Levitical ceremonies, (2) in Christian service.
3. Why was the "first-born" consecrated?
4. What is the foundation for purity?
5. Was there any efficacy in these sacrifices in the cleansing of sin and diseases?

LESSON 28.

Levitical Ceremonies. — Sabbaths.

- I. The seventh day.
 1. The fourth commandment. — Exodus 20:8-11.
 2. To be kept holy. — Exodus 16:23; 20:8; 23:12; 35:2, 3; Deuteronomy 5:12.
 3. What this Sabbath was for. — Exodus 31:13-17; 35:2; Deuteronomy 5:15.
 4. Penalty for violating the Sabbath. — Exodus 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36.
 5. The Christian Sabbath.
 - a. Christ the Lord of the Sabbath. — Mark 2:27, 28; Luke 6:5.
 - b. Resurrection of Christ the first day of the week. —

Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19.

c. Subsequent gatherings the first day of the week. — John 20:26; Acts 2; 1:20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2.

II. The seventh month.

1. The Feast of Trumpets.

a. The time. — Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1.

b. The offering. — Numbers 29:2–6.

2. The Day of Atonement.

a. The time. — Leviticus 16:29; 23:27; Numbers 29:7.

b. The ceremony. — Leviticus 16:30–34; 23:28–32;

Numbers 29:8–11.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles.

a. The time. — Leviticus 23:34; Numbers 29:12.

b. The ceremony. — Leviticus 23:35–41; Numbers

29:13–40.

III. The seventh year.

1. The Sabbatical year set apart. — Exodus 23:10, 11; Leviticus 25:2–7; Deuteronomy 15:1.

2. Objects of the Sabbath.

a. To let the land rest. — Exodus 23:11.

b. Shall be meat for the people and for the stock. —

Leviticus 25:6, 7.

NOTE. — This Sabbath was designed for both temporal and spiritual gain. Occasional recreation for the physical body, and exercise for the spiritual man is beneficial all around.

c. Release of the poor, and freedom for servants. — Deuteronomy 15:2–18.

IV. The Feast of Pentecost.

1. The time. — Leviticus 23:15, 16; Deuteronomy 16:9.

2. The offering. — Leviticus 23:17–22.

3. A time for rejoicing. — Deuteronomy 16:10–12.

4. A notable observance of this feast. — Acts 2.

V. The year of Jubilee. — Leviticus 25.

1. Relation to the Sabbatical year (9–16).

2. The breaking of obedience (18–22).

3. Redemption of land and houses (23–34).
4. Care of the poor (35–46).
5. Redemption of servants (47–55).

1. What is the meaning of the word sabbath?
2. What is meant by “resting?”
3. Does the history of the Jews indicate that their Sabbaths were faithfully kept?
4. What was Nehemiah’s experience with Sabbath-keeping?
5. Give reasons for keeping Sunday as the Christian Sabbath.

Children’s Book Reprint (Continued)

THE FOLLY OF PROCRASTINATION;

OR, THE STORY OF CHARLES AND EDWARD MARTIN.

Revised and Reprinted © 2003

THE TEST (continued)

Edward, as soon as his mother had given him leave, scampered across the fields; and as he entered the yard before the house, he was greeted by the shrill, joyous bark of the little dog. The door was closed, but Mr. Moore knew his step, and bade him come in. When Edward entered, stretching out his hand, the old man said, “Well, my boy, you are welcome; How are all at home?”

“I have come, Mr. Moore to see if I can help you to do anything this afternoon, as my own work is finished.”

“That is a good child! Why, there is a little wood I should like to have cut, as it threatens to be cold; and I think we shall have rain tomorrow,” added he, as he

glanced at the western sky, where a few black clouds were beginning to appear.

Edward seized with good heart the axe, and in a few moments the large sticks were reduced to a convenient size, and nicely piled up for use.

As he worked, Mr. Moore questioned him about the little gardens, of which Charles had told him the evening before when he passed to the post-office.

“I am glad,” said he, after he had heard Edward’s story—“ I am glad your garden is sown; I am afraid your brother will be sorry for not having planted his. There will probably be a heavy rain before long, and it would be of great benefit to the seeds. My own little patch is nearly all

planted; I have worked in it since morning, but am weak and old, so I was obliged to rest. I do not think myself able to finish it this evening.”

“Then, Mr. Moore, I can do it for you. I am not tired.”

Now, some of our readers may think it strange that Edward, when he had completed his own, did not do something to Charles’s ground. But, his father had forbidden each from doing the other’s work, unless both were usefully employed. It was a prudent precaution, and, considering Charles’s procrastinating and Edward’s obliging disposition, a very necessary one.

Edward at last prevailed on Mr. Moore to accept his kind offer. He carried the old gentleman’s arm-chair into the garden, and while he worked they entered into a very instructive and serious conversation. Mr. Moore and Edward enjoyed each other’s society very much, notwithstanding the great difference of their ages; for they both loved to talk of the same things.

Edward was asked a great many questions about the adventures of the morning, and of the evening before, and he at last confessed his real motive for staying at home, though, without

attaching the least blame to his brother Charles.

It was evident that Edward valued his father’s approbation highly, and greatly desired to merit it; and, after some time, the conversation insensibly* assumed a religious character, and from the allusions that were made to his good conduct, and the encouragement he received for it, they were led to speak of a higher rule of duty—of our relations to our heavenly Father, and the reward that His faithful servants expect.

“You did right, Edward,” said the old man; “and obedience to your father will never fail to be rewarded; but is it your own goodness you expect will bring you to heaven?”

“Oh no, Mr. Moore; it never could!”

“To what, then, do you look for salvation?”

“To faith in the Lord Jesus.”

“But, Edward, do you mean by faith a mere belief in His existence. We are told that the devils also believe, and tremble. Do you suppose that theirs is *saving* faith?”

“No, Mr. Moore: I mean by saving faith, that faith that makes us *love* and obey the Lord Jesus, for, you know, He says, ‘If ye

* By degrees. Naturally. Without notice.

love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15).

“I know what you mean, Edward. You wish to say that *saving faith* is shown by works. ‘While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ (Romans 5:8) He suffered what we deserved to suffer. By his death we have life. We believe this, therefore we love Him; and if we love Him we desire to be like Him; so we obey His commands, and try to follow His example.”

“Do you recollect what the beloved disciple John says, ‘If God so loved us we ought also to love one another.’ (1 John 4:11) And the apostle Paul tells us that ‘Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.’” (Romans 13:11).

“We are told that GOD IS LOVE, and that God so LOVED the world, that He ‘sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.’ (1 John 4:10) Christ loved us; He suffered and died for us; faith in His love and in His atoning sacrifice draws our hearts to love Him, and makes us willing to obey His commandments; and the chief of these is, ‘Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbour as thyself’ (Luke 10:27) and, ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’ (Matthew 7:12) Good

works are the results, in evidences of *saving faith*, as really as an abundant crop of good fruit proves the tree to be in a sound and healthful condition. ‘Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.’” (Matthew 7:17, 18, 20)

“We do not expect our works to save us. We do them because ‘the love of Christ constraineth us.’ (2 Corinthians 5:14). We behold His example, and we follow it, for it is perfect. Edward, do you remember what our Saviour says about our good works?”

“Yes, Mr. Moore, ‘So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.’” (Luke 17:10)

“Yes, Edward, that is it; you see that works cannot save us; it is the blood of Christ alone that cleanseth from all sin.”

“And yet, does not the apostle James say, that ‘As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also’” (James 2:26)

“He does certainly say so.

And true it is, that faith without works, (or such faith as produces no works) is dead; such, is the faith of the devils who believe and tremble. But this *dead, fruitless* faith, the apostle carefully contrasts with that **LIVING, SAVING FAITH**, which produces the fruits of righteousness. These works are done, not with a view to commend ourselves to God; for you know that in His holy sight 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' (Isaiah 64:6) but we do them in following the example of Christ, that we may be like Him. Do you understand me, Edward?"

"I think I do, Mr. Moore."

"You see then, that if a person willfully does wrong to his neighbour, whatever his profession be, we cannot believe him to be a Christian, for an apostle tells that "*if any man have not the Spirit of*

Christ, he is none of his," (Romans 8:9) and we know that the spirit of Christ is a spirit of love, justice, and mercy. Christ Jesus 'did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' (1 Peter 2:22).

"Let us, my dear child, try to love Him and serve Him with our whole heart, and when we have done and suffered His holy will here below, He will receive us into heaven, where there is no more sin, and where 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'" (1 John 3:2)

With conversations like this, did the old man often endeavour to instruct his little friend in the simple truths of Christianity.

And Edward loved to listen to him; for his young heart was prepared to receive the Word with meekness.

THE REGRET

ABOUT sunset the work was finished, the peas and early beans were nicely covered up in their drills, and Edward returned home with a happy heart; for we are never so happy as when we are conscious of having done right.

As he climbed the next fence but one to the house, he heard someone calling him from behind.

"Halloo! Stop! Wait for me!"

and looking back he saw Charles scampering after him, as usual out of breath with hard running.

"Well, Ned," exclaimed he, as he came up, "we have had a grand time of it. But the fish did not turn out. I asked, Mr. Abbott about it, but he laughed and shook his head, and told me he reckoned they were hiding in this warm spring weather. And do you know," added he, in a lower

key, "I felt half ashamed when he said so, for I thought it was a sly hit at me."

They soon started into the garden.

Charles was pleased with his brother's work, and wished his own was done, but comforted himself with the idea of setting all right on Monday morning. Alas! it is easier to let a favourable moment pass, than it is to recall it.

During supper Charles had more than enough to say about his adventures. He spoke of a poor woman whose stand a wicked boy had upset, and whose apples must have been lost had not George Jones and himself helped her to gather them up. Then he talked of Arthur and William, and of all they had told him about what they had seen while they were away. He liked them on the whole; but complained that "they went off to see an old person who had once lived in their family and made her go with them to a store to choose herself a dress and a shawl, for which they paid, and stayed so long, listening to her talk, that they almost lost a sight of any fishing."

"And do you not think they were right?" said Mr. Martin. "That good woman often nursed them, when their mother was too

sick to take care of them, and when they were too little to take care of themselves. Do you not think, my son, that it would be very wicked and ungrateful to neglect her now? She loves to talk to them, and as she is old, and truly a good woman, it is their duty to listen. Do you remember what is said in the Bible about showing respect to the aged? We talked about it a few days ago."

"Yes, father."

"Let me hear you repeat it."

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God." (Leviticus 19:32).

"I am very sorry to hear you blaming Arthur and William for showing great respect to an aged and excellent woman, in whom their gratitude is due."

Charles felt greatly ashamed, and said little during the rest of the evening. The truth was he talked so much that he thought very little. This is a common fault of children and youth, and sometimes of grown people too; and it often makes them say very foolish, if not very sinful things.

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