

Lessons from Jude

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The book of Jude is almost the shortest in the Bible. It shares striking similarities with Chapter 2 of Second Peter, particularly in its themes of warning against false teachers. We will examine the words of comfort and caution in this book, comparing them with other sections of Scripture, especially those in Peter.

The Purpose of Jude

Jude writes to those who are “sanctified” “preserved” and “called.” The word “sanctified” is derived from the Greek word “Hagiazo,” which is rooted in the word “Hagios.” John 17:17 tells us that we are sanctified by the Truth, while 1 Peter 1:22 says that we are Hagnidzo or made clean by obeying the Truth. While the Greek word for “preserve” appears many times and is often associated with keeping the commandments, we find the most relevant use in Revelation 3:10:

“Because thou hast kept (preserve) the word of my patience, I also will keep (preserve) thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The Greek word for called points us to the sequence of salvation—called, chosen, and faithful—which appears in its completion in Revelation 17:14

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

The introduction to Jude informs us that this letter was written for those who are obeying the Truth and keeping it with patience. The language of the greeting is intended to remind the reader that God will keep them from temptation. It brings 1 Corinthians 10:13 to the mind of the reader:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

This idea is strengthened when we compare

Jude with Second Peter. The opening section of Scripture in Second Peter gives an outline of exactly how to overcome sin. The outline ends with these verses:

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present Truth.”—2 Peter 1:8-12.

Jude and Peter become almost identical only a few verses later. While patience is mentioned by Peter, it is not explicitly mentioned in Jude. This is because the outline for victory over sin in Peter specifies patience. Therefore, Jude assumes his readers are patiently maintaining the victories God has given them over sin, while reaching forward to the mark of the High calling in Christ Jesus. These are people who are bearing fruit and therefore giving glory to God:

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”—John 15:8.

Jude expresses the purpose of His letter in these words:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 1:3.

The Ladder of Christian faith, as outlined in 2 Peter, describes what genuine faith looks like. I have written about this ladder in WM-3356, an August 2024 newsletter titled “The Path of the Just.” Following is a brief refresher. Patience is a step midway through this ladder; those who

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2 exercise patience gain experience, and from that experience, they gain hope (Romans 5:1-5). This ladder teaches us that overcoming sin and giving glory to God are the nature of faith. When we do this, the mystery of Godliness (“Christ in you” Colossians 1:27) is fulfilled. Jude is writing this letter to exhort us to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

The old faith is not merely the belief that Jesus saves us from death, nor is it the belief that Jesus gives us victory merely over our hated sins. The old faith is the belief that Jesus saves us from death and from all our sins and makes us His children by implanting the thoughts and actions of God into our hearts through the Truth of the Bible and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus can make us sinless and restore us into the likeness of God. He does this through His work as High Priest. Blotting out our sins forgives our past, while changing our hearts and empowering us to obey by the Holy Spirit ensures our present and future victories. We cannot claim to be sinless now; this is a work that only Christ can do, and only if we cooperate. The Bible teaches that it will be completed at the close of probation. But each of us can prepare now by breaking every sinful habit and putting to death every wicked thought.

The Letter

After the introduction and purpose of the letter are listed, Jude tells us why he is exhorting us to contend for the faith:

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*Jude 1:4*.

Peter adds that these people follow their own wicked ways and sell God’s people because of their covetousness; he reminds his readers of Baalim.

To caution against following the wicked ways of these men, Jude calls his readers to remember:

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication,

and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”—*Jude 1:5-7*.

God did not spare the faithless, disobedient children of Israel. He did not spare the angels who sinned; and He did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah, but made them examples. God does not overlook willful sin; He shows no partiality in judgment:

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”—*1 Peter 1:17*.

After these verses, Peter and Jude differ. Jude shifts the focus of his letter to remind people of what they already know and to warn them against following the wicked. His language has already recalled God’s faithfulness and power. Jude’s letter is intended to point out the unfaithfulness and wickedness of the professed followers of Christ. Then both Peter and Jude identify a specific sinful trait:

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil (Blasphemeo) of dignities.”—*2 Peter 2:10*.

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil (Blasphemeo) of dignities.”—*Jude 1:8*.

Here we see that those who defile their flesh do so by following their own unclean lusts. Peter describes them as presumptuous and self-willed. Both Peter and Jude list the final sin as speaking evil of dignities.

Here is where the eyes of my understanding were opened. The Greek word for dignities is *Doxai*; additionally, the dominion despised can be translated as “lordship.” These wicked people despise the Lordship of Christ, which Peter supports with the words “Self-willed.” Both Peter and Jude say that they speak evil of *Doxai*, which means ‘glories’ or ‘glory’. The wicked described here are those who speak evil of giving God glory:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”—*1 Corinthians 10:31*.

These are people who call a plant-based lifestyle “legalistic” or a “works-based salvation.” Those who condemn others for speaking against jewelry. Christians who refuse to let Jesus be Lord of their lives. These are not people who know the Truth but do not practice it. These are people who know the Truth, and not only

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do they not practice it, but they speak evil of it. Jude then contrasts these people with Christ:

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation (Blasphemia), but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”—*Jude 1:9*.

These wicked people vilify giving glory to God, but Christ Himself did not vilify Satan. The contrast can really be seen in Greek, so I have added the Greek word Blaspheme for clarity, which means to “Vilify.”

“But these speak evil (Blasphemeo) of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”—*Jude 1:10*.

They have no experiential knowledge of God’s glory. Instead, they corrupt themselves through the works of the flesh. Peter says they cannot stop sinning and that they are cursed children:

“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:”—*2 Peter 2:14*.

Jude continues:

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core.”—*Jude 1:11*.

Jude draws upon the rich history of three specific people. He uses their stories to illustrate the sins of those who speak evil of giving glory to God. 1 John 3:12 tells us that Cain killed his brother because his own deeds were wicked, while his brother’s were righteous. When we consider John 3:19-21, we see that those in the way of Cain hate the light because it condemns them. Cain killed his brother because Abel’s works of righteousness pointed out his own unrighteous course.

In 2 Peter 2:15, Balaam’s love of money is described, specifically money gained from unrighteousness. In Revelation 2:14, it is recorded that he taught the enemies of God’s people to lead them into adultery and idolatry for the sake of worldly position and wealth.

Core, or the Hebrew name Korah, defied the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron. He claimed the whole congregation was holy and didn’t need a leader or a priest. Ellen White speaks of this rebellion and applies it to those who rise against the health message. This is where Jude says these wicked perish. They are self-righteous and self-willed. They don’t

need Christ to purify them, and they don’t want Him to rule their lives.

Jude then describes these people through examples in nature:

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”—*Jude 1:12-13*.

The Greek word for “spots” in Jude is more accurately translated as “reefs.” Most scholars think that Jude misspelled “spots” from spilos (the word Peter uses) to spilas (reefs). It was an intentional play on words. These are reefs in your love feasts, causing people to make shipwreck of faith. Feasting without fear, like a wolf eating next to a lamb, without fear of danger. “Feeding themselves” actually translates to “Shepherds that feed themselves.” They claim to be looking out for others, but in reality, they are looking out for themselves. They are storm clouds promising the blessing of rain to parched ground, passing without shedding a drop, carried away by lusts and every wind of doctrine. They are professed trees of righteousness, yet in autumn (fruit season), they have no fruit. They are not giving glory to God. They were dead to the world, but now they are dead to Christ. Plucked up by the roots, they have no more relationship with Jesus. They are wild waves roaring with the boastings of their disobedience. They follow the original wandering star, Satan, and the darkness of “obscurest obscurity” is eternally reserved for them in the second death.

Their condemnation has been from of old, Jude 1:14 cites Enoch as the first to prophecy of their destruction.

Jude then describes them by their actions:

“These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.”—*Jude 1:16*.

They grumble about giving glory to God and boast of their sins. The Greek word for “complainers” is literally translated as “finding fault with their portion”. The lot/portion God has given His children in this life is the cross. They think it evil to crucify the flesh and seek those things which are above. Instead, they follow

4 their sinful desires, boasting and showing impartiality to gain favor and benefit themselves.

Jude then addresses those to whom he is writing:

“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”—*Jude 1:17-21*.

Jude seeks to dispel any alarm that may have arisen after his readers recognized people in high places as wicked. He tells them that Jesus said this would happen. He then points to these evil people as the cause for division in the church. They “set themselves apart,” as earthly-minded people, they are at enmity with God. They do not realize they are setting themselves apart for destruction; they have not received the Holy Spirit.

Then he encourages the believers to continue building themselves up in the faith, striving for victory over every sin, in pursuit of the perfection God has promised. Praying in the Holy Spirit, they are to keep themselves in the love of God, but not in sinful pleasure. They are not to count themselves to have already attained perfection, but they are to patiently wait for the mercy of God that gives eternal life. Jude then tells the believers to make efforts to save the wicked:

“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”—*Jude 1:22-23*.

We are to remember that God does not call us to hate the sinner but to hate the sin. The literal translation of Jude 22 is “and to some be kind, judging thoroughly,” or compassionately judge. This indicates that some who walk an evil course have been led by others, being unaware of their danger. If this is not the case, they are to be saved using fear. They need to be warned that God is not mocked, that sowing to the flesh means reaping corruption:

“And if ye call on the Father, who without

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respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:”—*1 Peter 1:17*.

Jude admonishes us to warn these people, and if they do not listen, the Bible says to mark them and avoid them (2 Timothy 3:5 and Romans 16:17). Avoid them, but do not pretend they don't exist. By giving them the cold shoulder, we could very easily push away those who, otherwise, may be brought into agreement and harmony. Redemption is a part of the divine nature of love; and all who love will be seeking to save the lost, not earnestly acting as if they don't exist. Then Jude closes his letter with a final confirmation of the power of God to enable us to overcome all sin:.

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”—*Jude 1:24-25*.

Jesus can make you be found faultless before His throne:

“And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”—*Revelation 14:5*.

This is the throne of judgment. God can perfect a people, making them without sin, enabling them to stand in the very presence of the glory of God, enduring the eye of the righteous judge. These will be pronounced fit to enter heaven without tasting of death. Legalistic? Works-based? Unloving? No, this is the final fruit of genuine faith. Now that you have been freed from the words of those whose judgment has been corrupted by sin, let us take a look at what salvation costs.

The cost of salvation

What must I do to be saved? Salvation is about one thing: Love.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—*John 3:16*.

God judges actions by the motives that prompt them. As mentioned in previous newsletters, there are only two motives: love of self and love of others. God has shown us His love, and this love ought to awaken love in our hearts.

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“We love him, because he first loved us.”—*1 John 4:19*.

Jesus loved us so much that He left heaven itself, gave up His divine body in exchange for the body of a man, and became obedient to the death of the cross. In light of this, Paul says:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—*Romans 12:1-2*.

The sacrifice of Christ inspires us to make sacrifices ourselves. When we have love in our hearts, we have been born again. Love is wholly divine, it is a pure motive, and it can only come from God. God can never accept works. If He said, “all you must do to be saved is keep the law,” people would keep it, but they would be motivated by self-preservation. Every work done for the sake of salvation is corrupted by the same motives that got Satan cast out of heaven, a desire to preserve self. If we want to be saved, we must be born again with the divine motive of love. This is a requirement to enter heaven. Those who are born again have no conflict with the Ten Commandments:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”—*1 John 5:1-5*.

Those who are born of God overcome, and this victory gives them hope. John points his

readers to Jesus with these words:

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”—*1 John 3:1-3*.

Those who have the hope of heaven purify themselves, but how?

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”—*1 Peter 1:22-23*.

Jesus is coming for a people that have purified themselves by obeying the Truth—they have a faith that “worketh by love to purify and cleanse the soul.” Every Truth of the Word of God has its importance and place in the hearts of God’s people. Only those who love the Truth will be in heaven:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”—*John 14:6*.

What then does it take to be lost? The Bible says that Satan will work:

“with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”—*2 Thessalonians 2:10*.

If you don’t love the Truth, you will be lost; if you love the Truth, you will be saved. This verse is a powerful testament to the fact that the cost of salvation is love. For man so loved God that he gave himself as a living sacrifice, to glorify God in everything he does, by partaking in the spirit of love and obeying the Truth.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him

6 must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—*John 4:24*.

Jesus loved us enough to give us the ticket to heaven. We must love Christ enough to purify ourselves in preparation to enter heaven.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—*Revelation 7:14*.

This includes obeying all the Truth you know and seeking more. The ladder of faith includes gaining knowledge, then exercising self-control and patience after receiving it. Our Christian walk is progressive, and we can only grow into Christ as we obey the Truth He reveals to us. Jesus tells us very plainly in Luke 14:25-33 that we are to consider the cost of salvation. Unless we forsake all, we cannot be disciples of Jesus. Salvation costs everything; it is an unfair equal trade—everything we have for everything Jesus has. Anything we are unwilling to give up, by definition, becomes an idol, for God says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” If we determine to place our error before the Truth of God, when Truth is brought home to the heart, we become idolaters. No erroneous idea or sin, whether big or small, is safe to cling to. We must love Truth more than anything and everything, or we will be deceived and lost. All Truth that can be obeyed is saving Truth.

Unpopular and forgotten Truths

The Bible clearly condemns men or women wearing the clothes intended for the opposite gender.

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.”—*Deuteronomy 22:5*.

The church has become deeply influenced by blending male and female characteristics. It has become nearly impossible to discern, from clothing, whether a person is a man or a woman. Some might dispute this by pointing out that gender can be discerned by figure, but that’s a problem too. Men and women wear clothes that cling so tightly to them that painting their clothes on would be just as effective, and in some cases, even more modest. These aren’t people of the world, but rather professed Adventists within the Adventist education system and Adventist churches, some of whom are even paid with tithes. God places this sin as one of the few abominations; this actually makes it just

as wicked as homosexuality. This is not the only abomination. Looking upon the nakedness of family members is considered an abomination. I encourage you to read Leviticus 18, as specific instances of nakedness are left out. Husbands, take notice of Leviticus 18:19. A lot of churches nowadays are filled with members that force others to look upon their nakedness by appearing to worship God less than half clothed. True worship is focused on God, not self. At what point ought we to draw attention to ourselves? Church isn’t a competition between whether you or God can hold someone’s attention longer. Let God be glorified and let mankind be forgotten.

Another abomination God hates is an unjust balance (Deu 25:13-16). Instead of taking up space explaining this principle from the Bible, I will provide this quote instead:

In every action of life the true Christian is just what he desires those around him to think he is. He is guided by Truth and uprightness. He does not scheme; therefore he has nothing to gloss over. He may be criticized, he may be tested; but through all, his unbending integrity shines out like pure gold. He is a friend and benefactor to all connected with him, and his fellow men place confidence in him, for he is trustworthy. Does he employ laborers to gather in his harvest? He does not keep back their hard-earned money. Has he means for which he has no immediate use? He relieves the necessities of his less-fortunate brother. He does not seek to enlarge his possessions by taking advantage of the untoward circumstances of his neighbor. He accepts only a fair price for that which he sells. If there are defects in the articles sold, he frankly tells the buyer, even though by so doing he may seem to work against his own pecuniary interests.... Satan knows full well what a power for good is the life of a man of unbending integrity, and he puts forth zealous efforts to prevent men from living such lives. He comes to them with alluring temptations, promising them wealth, position, worldly honor, if they will but yield the principles of righteousness. And he has much success.... From the sad history of many who have failed we learn the danger of prosperity. It is not those who have lost their property who are in greatest danger, but those who have obtained a fortune.... Prayer is often requested for men and women in affliction, and this is right. But those in prosperity are more in need of the prayers of God’s servants, for they are in greater danger of losing salvation. In the valley of humiliation men walk securely while they reverence God and make Him their trust. On the lofty pinnacle, where praise is heard they

need the help of special power from above....
 “—*Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1902.

In all business transactions, we are to let the light shine decidedly. There is to be no sharp practice. Everything is to be done with the strictest integrity. Better consent to lose something financially than to gain a few shillings by sharp practice. We shall lose nothing in the end by fair dealing. We are to live the law of God in our world, and perfect a character after the divine similitude. All business, with those in the faith and those not in the faith, is to be transacted on square, righteous principles. Everything is to be seen in the light of God’s law, everything done without fraud, without duplicity, without one tinge of guile.”—*Manuscript 47*, 1898, par. 22.

Unjust balances refer to any business dealings that assign an unfair value to something. Especially in purchases.

“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.”—*Proverbs 20:14*.

Deuteronomy 14:3 tells us not to eat abominable things. Immediately following are the details about clean and unclean animals. Eating unclean meat is an abomination, too. Interestingly, I have discovered that Skipjack tuna is unclean. This is the tuna used at Subway (the sandwich fast food chain). While we shouldn’t be eating meat at all, some Adventists still eat fish; hopefully, they don’t eat it at Subway.

That ends the list of abominations that God hates just as much as homosexuality.

Reflection

What can be done about these abominations? Many people need a compassionate warning from the Bible. The Truth is cutting; every effort should be made to lighten the blow, but people cannot continue unwarned. Sincere believers will obey the Truth. They may not be happy to hear at first, but the Holy Spirit will impress the Truth upon their heart until they either change or vilify the conviction.

The church can only be purified by the Truth. We should earnestly pray for heaven-born tact and not speak until we know it will be in the right spirit.

“Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, of force, is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach, assume a defensive, repelling position, and increase their strength of resistance as they are met by another power than love. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority

into subjection to himself. Wisdom and strength he could command, but the means he employed to overcome evil were wisdom and strength of love. Suffer nothing to divide your interest from your present work until God shall see fit to give you another piece of work in the same field. Seek not for happiness, for that is never to be found by seeking for it. Go about your duty. Let faithfulness mark all your doings, and be clothed with humility.”—*Review and Herald* May 11, 1886.

The most effective way to address many of these individuals is through personal appeals. Taking them aside and speaking to them privately. IF public rebuke can be avoided, it should be. People who are rebuked publicly may be compelled by pride to resist.

The Real Problem

In the future, I will write more about true worship, but first, we must assess the real problem. Many who profess to be Seventh Day Adventists are such in name only. They will not respond favorably to Truth because they have a problem in their hearts:

“Let every professed Christian be just what he professes to be—Christlike. This will be considered by many a long, hard hill to climb. It will be, if they consent to make it so. But an earnest, determined effort to overcome in the name of Jesus, a will surrendered to Christ, a heart so closely united to Christ that His grace will flow into it, will make the Christian life easy. We must elevate the standard and begin just now to glorify God. As Christ’s ambassadors, we need the divine toning up. We want the fresh breezes from heaven to give vigor to our stagnant spirituality.

I might point out in your life acts entirely unworthy of a Christian; but that would only be like picking the leaves off a living tree; they would put forth again as strong and full of life as ever. The work must be done for the heart. Then there will be a vivid sense of Christian courtesy and propriety; there will be high-toned morality, because the soul is beholding Jesus and becoming changed into His likeness. Then you will manifest carefulness in all the little things, taking up the duties nearest which have been neglected while you were ready to teach and admonish others. The only life which is worth living is one whose influence tends to elevate and ennoble other lives.”—*Letter 16a-1891*.

“The idol money has power over thousands who trust and love wealth more than they love or trust in the living God. The things of the world are sought after and considered worthy to be admired and enjoyed by all those who

are not lovers of the cross of Christ and who are not spiritual worshipers. The fashions of the world, the desire of the eye, the love of self, the vainglory—all are obstructions to piety and separate the soul from God. Should we take up these hindrances one by one and strike to destroy them, it would be like picking off the leaves of a tree, which would only put forth its green foliage again. The Truth, Bible truth, the message God has given to us, is the axe to be laid at the root of the tree.” —*Manuscript 50, 1886.*

Before the Truth can be accepted, a work must be done to prepare the heart to receive it. Otherwise, it will be like picking leaves off a tree. The root of the problem remains unresolved. Many are willing to leave the slavery of socially unacceptable sins. Yet, they remain unwilling to leave socially acceptable sins or private sins.

“If we would indeed become children of God, we must renounce at once and forever, every sinful indulgence. We must close every avenue through which Satan may gain control of our thoughts or our affections. Many persons manifest determined hatred of some sins denounced in the word of God, while they at the same time indulge their favorite sin. Not so did the Ephesian converts. Their particular sin was magic. By this means Satan held them in his power. They might have been earnest and vigilant to correct other evils, but had they spared this one sin, they would ere long have yielded their faith. But they laid the axe to the root of the tree; they renounced the hidden things of darkness and destroyed that which had led them into sin.”

This incident, was placed on record as an important lesson for every age. The Ephesians directed their efforts against the very sin of which they were guilty. Have the people of God in this age acted in like manner? There are many who manifest supreme devotion to their money, their business or their houses and lands. The ambitious man worships fame or honor as his idol. The covetous man fosters covetousness. The sensualist is wedded to his lust. These love their cherished objects of pursuit more than they love God. They are idolaters.

Those who venture to cherish the sin which they love best, are tampering with Satan’s sorcery. The enchanting power of temptation has paralyzed conscience and blinded reason, so

that they do not perceive their danger. The magical books have not been destroyed.”—*Signs of the Times, May 18, 1882.*

The hearts of the people must be touched with the love of God. This is the only means by which people will be led to renounce error in favor of the Truth.

“We love him, because he first loved us.”—1 John 4:19.

When our hearts are touched with the love of God, when we have seen the pearl of great price, we will sell all to win Christ. Many have never laid eyes on the pearl themselves, and they think that they are being tricked into selling all for nothing. It is not uncommon for people zealous of the Truth to attempt to force sacrifice upon others without revealing the reason for the sacrifice. We need to understand that we can speak words, but we cannot touch hearts. There is a great need for consecrated Christians; those who have a living experience in the love of God and are doers of the Word.

Conclusion

I hope that the letter of Jude has emboldened your faith in the Word of God as it has mine. It’s easy to listen to the hecklers and weaken in resolve because there is so much resistance. Others become contentious and stubbornly fight for the Truth in an un-Christian way. God has called us to love, and it is love alone that can break down the barriers of the heart. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to himself. Wisdom and strength he could command, but the means he employed to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love. Love Conquers all. Lift up Jesus, and He will draw all men unto Himself.

For a finished work



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. —Luke 7:35

More Food for the Little Flock —