



CHRISTIAN STANDARDS

By Kenneth Mime

This message was first presented by Brother Milne on Truth Seeker's Bible Class, broadcast each Sunday at 8:15 a.m., from station WAIT, Chicago.

WE ARE living in days when Christian standards are at a low ebb. In fact, churches that once had high standards and enforced them are now allowing those same principles to trail in the dust. God has not changed His mind regarding the standards He has given in Scripture. The church age is a training time for those who will be rulers in the Kingdom of God. The disciplinary laws laid down in the Bible bring great blessing to the one who embraces them.

Christ is the very embodiment of all that is pure and noble. By beholding His well-disciplined, self-sacrificing life, we cannot but desire to follow His footsteps in renouncing the wrong habits and customs that militate against the development of our Christian experience. The Lord will furnish the power that will enable us to surrender every transgression of the great standards and live them out in our lives.

We need to heed the admonition of Isaiah, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people" (Isa. 62:10). We need men and, yes, women who will lift their voices against sin and iniquity and call God's people back to Bible standards. This is not a popular calling but it will have the blessing of the Lord.

Now, let us look at some guiding principles. Paul gives us a guide in his letter to the church at Corinth. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). The Christian is to witness by his life for Christ before all men. Therefore, he ought to do only that which becomes one professing to be a follower of Jesus. When Joseph was tempted, he asked: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Joseph refused to dishonor his Lord.

"He that saith he abideth in him ought also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). The profession of Christianity gives the world the right to expect the life to be in accord with the profession. One of the leading sins of the last days is that of men "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). The Lord's counsel is, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). Some things may be innocent in themselves, yet it is wrong to do them when it would influence others to do wrong.

Does the Bible give any specific teaching on standards that should be kept? It does! Let us consider the matter of recreation. We are hearing much of the need for recreation, and we agree that every Christian needs to consider having a time for recreation. A good guide to follow is the advice that Paul gave to the church at Philippi.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). This eliminates reading and amusement which are dishonest, unjust, impure, untrue, horrid, disreputable, and immoral. If Christians would faithfully abstain from such, there would be a decided improvement in the quality of modern literature and entertainment.

In a recent popular magazine we found this illustration: “Dr. John S. Winbish, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York, says, ‘Newsstands and bookstores have been loaded with lewd literature. Religious leaders are alarmed that profiteers are permitted to turn liberty into license by prostituting freedom of the press. Every impression transmitted through our eyes is etched indelibly on our minds. Surely God will not long tolerate a people who feed their baser instincts while neglecting the spiritual part of man.’”

We thank God for someone who has lifted the trumpet and begun to sound a warning. It is our duty, as those who are looking for the return of Jesus, to do all that we can to help people to be ready for that day. Exposing and preaching against sin will bring conviction as nothing else will do.

Since we are living in the last days, we must be on the watch that we are not caught in the flood of sin. We must not be found wanting when that day arrives. If we listen to the words of our Lord we can be kept from the danger. Jesus said, “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).

It is not wrong to eat and drink, neither is it sinful to get married. God, in fact, has provided for these things. But when men and women become so absorbed in these things that they carry them to sinful extremes, and become so engrossed in worldly pleasures and indulgence of carnal appetite that they neglect the spiritual preparation needed for the day of God, then they do wrong. That is what happened in the days of Noah, when the world was being warned that because of its wickedness people were to be destroyed.

One of the solemn warnings Jesus gave in connection with His second coming is, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luke 21:34). To become so absorbed in worldly things as to neglect the spiritual preparation needed to meet Christ when He comes, is to run the risk of loss of eternal life.

Paul also gives us advice concerning our program of life. Read with me Titus 2:11-13: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously; and godly, in this present world looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” The Christian cannot, without peril to his soul, indulge in many things that are of the world. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

To be a Christian calls for self-denial—abstinence from all those things which tend to evil. The Saviour does not forbid anything that is really good. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84: 11). Christians are not asked to

give up anything save that which is harmful to themselves and to others. But to be a Christian calls for the bearing of the cross every day, a life that at times is hard and painful, because the world and its attractions sorely tempt.

We should be willing to renounce anything in the world for the sake of the Lord Jesus. He will more than compensate for any sacrifice we may make. Jesus gives us, in return, blessings infinitely greater; such as inward peace, tranquility, and the blessed assurance of a life that will measure with the life of God in a land where the shadows will never come.