Will He Find Faith?

(by James P. Miller)

In **Luke 18:8** the Lord asks the question, ***“Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”*** Christ was disturbed over the conditions that He found in the days of the New Testament. The same conditions are with us in 1973. That there has been a great “cooling off” in religion no one can deny. It is getting harder, by the day, to convert the lost to Christ. There are many reasons for this indifference. One of the foremost is the taking of the wife and mother out of the home and putting her to work. She is no longer there to have all things ready for the family to attend services and to show the right interest in spiritual affairs. Other factors enter also, such as materialism, the influence of “science falsely so called” in the class room, etc. The facts are with us, however, and if we are to survive as a people we will have to find the answers.

First is a BETTER HOME ENVIRONMENT. We must do a better job of instilling in our children the same spiritual values that were placed in us. We take it for granted, many times, that the young ones in our homes will have the same faith we have, only to wake up too late and realize that it is not true. The church only receives what the home gives it and regardless of the effectiveness of the church program it can, as a rule, be no better than the home. The rules are simple: prayer each time the family sits down together, a time set aside each day to study the Bible, stories of God’s greatness around mother’s knee instead of T.V. The rules are simple but rare is the home that follows them.

Secondly, WE MUST BE SURE THAT THE CHURCH HAS A PROGRAM FOR ALL. From the oldest member to the two-year-old who is attending class for the first time, the congregation should have the best teachers in the class room, the best material to study and an arrangement favorable for such study. As Bobbie points out in her new book, Stairway to Teaching, less time is spent in the Bible School than we would believe possible. Compared to the public schools less than two weeks is spent in study. This is compared to one year in the school of the nation. Just think, we are expected to do in 52 hours what the public school does in nine months.

WE MUST SET THE RIGHT EXAMPLE. In our lives, in teaching others, in showing the proper interest in all that is right, our children are not looking for perfection but for consistency. They have a right to expect the proper example. When mistakes are made they should be acknowledged instead of covered up. Conversation in the home should be spiritual in nature and uplift the church of the Lord. Children ought to hear the right things and ought to hear them in the right spirit. Comments, if they are critical, are misunderstood by children and they tend to magnify them. It is little wonder that our boys do not make elders and preachers when all they hear is derogatory remarks against those who have these positions.

Yes, the Lord asks, *“Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, what will He find on the earth?”* Unless we are able to teach our children to *“remember their Creator in the days of their youth,”* there will be no church tomorrow. It is up to all of us, may God help us as we know He will. *[Searching the Scriptures, Vol. 1, January 1973]*

**Hard of Heeding**

(by Robert Turner)

***“Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you”*** (**Ecclesiastes 7:21**).

We have read many articles telling us to guard our tongue – be careful of what you say – and we would do well to heed such advice (**James 3**). But the Holy Spirit also advises us to guard our ears: ***“What ye hear”*** (**Mark 4:24**), ***“how ye hear”*** (**Luke 8:18**). And equally important, there are times when we should not hear what we hear; i.e. *“we must have magnanimity of soul”* to disregard ugly things we have heard said against us.

Many years past, I received a letter charging me with rash things I had not done. I was about to fire off a hot reply when a friend came by, read the letter and my proposed reply, and gave me some excellent advice. *“Robert, that fellow wrote as though you were a wild-eyed fanatic. He has heard rumors, gossip – but he doesn’t really know you. He has no proof of those charges, but you are about to send him a signed confirmation.”* I destroyed the “proof” and tried to conduct myself so that he would never find out how bad I really was.

We are not dogs – we do not have to bark back at every snarl. We are made in the image of God, with the capacity to love our enemies and to forgive. ***“You have heard that is was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect”*** (**Matthew 5:43-48**).

***“‘Take heed to yourselves. If your brother trespasses against you, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him. And if he trespasses against you seven times in a day and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.’ And the apostles said the Lord, ‘Give us more faith’”*** (**Luke 17:3-5**). Nor is an ear that doesn’t hear everything a sign of weakness. The “chip-on-his-shoulder” fellow is usually weak and unsure of himself, and feels threatened by every dart.

Solomon’s advice has an earthly backdrop: forgive because you need forgiveness. ***“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”*** (**Matthew 6:14-15**); but God, having wronged no one, is the ultimate example of magnanimity. Sinned against, He gave His Son; who, knowing no sin died for you and me. We cannot fool God, but thank God, we do not have to. Justice is tempered with mercy, and through Christ, sins are remembered against us no more.

Those who would be recipients of His mercy must ***“being reviled, revile not again”*** (**1 Peter 2:23**). Take not heed unto all words spoken.