

Sharing Your Religion

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What else is religion than walking with God? (Coronis 40)

On June 19th, 1770, the Lord sent His twelve disciples throughout the whole spiritual world preaching the gospel that “the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages” (*True Christian Religion* 791). It is valuable to think how we also can share this good news with our children and other people around us. Sharing your religion with others is a wonderful thing, especially when we realize that what we are really sharing is our relationship with God.

Often, when we think about sharing our religion with the people around us, we think of sharing a belief system. Perhaps we share the reality and the details about life after death, or ideas of what true married love is. Or perhaps we share true ideas of who Jesus Christ is, along with the necessary process of regeneration. And yet why do we share these things? We share them because we want others to feel the freedom and the joy of having a relationship with our Human God.

Understanding that this relationship with the Lord is what we offer people when we share our religion can broaden our horizons and empower us with a sense of zeal and purpose in our efforts to share. For we can begin to realize that it is not only a matter of *what* we are sharing, but *who* we are sharing. We are sharing our relationship with a person. And that person is the Lord.

In realizing this, we also see that our relationship with the Lord is more than simply a relationship of thoughts. It is also a relationship of love and of life. People are more than simply thoughts and ideas. At their core, they are love, and in their outmost parts, they are action. In sharing our relationship with the Lord, we share our thoughts and knowledge about Him, our love for Him, and our lives, which hopefully serve and reflect Him. These three things, love, thought, and action, make us complete human beings.

Of these three, our thoughts and what we know often seem the most obvious things to share with someone. We can forget the vital need to share our love and affections as well. Yet, *Arcana Coelestia* reminds us that, “truths are allotted their place in the memory...in accordance with the pleasant and delightful things that introduce them” (3512). Are we sharing the things we know in a pleasant and delightful way? Can people see our delight and love for the things that we wish to share? And are we showing our love for the Lord, as well as our ideas about Him? *Heaven and Hell* points out that “a person’s life consists in his ability to think and to be moved by affection” (203). Is what we share simply our ability to think, or do we also share a willingness to be moved? For in the end, our relationship with the Lord doesn’t exist outside of our affection for Him.

The Writings tell us that sharing our belief is also accomplished simply by the way in which we interact with other people. We’ve heard the phrase “all religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good” (*The Doctrine of Life* 1). And so the final phase of sharing our religion is

in sharing the *effect* that that our relationship with the Lord has in our actual lives. *True Christian Religion* points out that, “believing in the Lord is not merely acknowledging Him but also doing His commandments; for simply acknowledging Him is solely a matter of thought...but doing His commandments is also a matter of acknowledgment from the will...and this is to believe” (151). What we see in this passage is a beautifully full picture of what belief and sharing that belief is. It is when we share both our thoughts about and our love for the Lord in the active work of our lives.

An example of sharing our relationship with the Lord on all three of these levels can be seen in how we relate to Him as our caretaker. We could say to our children, “I love the Lord because I know that He takes care of you and me. He watches over us just like a shepherd would, and, if we ever get lost or feel sad, He will do everything that He can to find us and bring us back to His loving arms. This makes me feel safe and brave when I need to be, and it lets me know that I am never alone. I also know that praying to the Lord and following His commandments helps me to remember how much He cares and that He really is present in our lives.” By sharing these ideas, and feelings, and actions with your children, they will see that the Lord is very important in your life and that their relationship with Him can be the most important and wonderful thing in their lives as well.

Finally, our relationship with the Lord is a process, so what we share is not simply a snap shot of our God, but a living, active, and growing way of life. We share a mindset that allows us to have an eternal trust in the Lord: trust that He saves and trust that what He teaches leads to a fuller and happier life. For, “to believe in the Lord is to have confidence that He saves” (*True Christian Religion* 2:3). And He saves to the extent that we turn toward Him completely, with our minds, hearts, and actions. Sharing our religion, therefore, is sharing our lives, with all of their struggles and triumphs, hopes and dreams. We share our own “walking with God” with a humble hope that others may benefit where they can and that we may grow in the process as well.