

# The Name Jesus Is Important

by Sylvia Parker

Jesus said to them, “Let the little children come unto me and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).

Are we as willing as Jesus to take our students into our hearts—to feed them, succor them, accept them, respect their freedom, welcome their new states of growth and their reaching out no matter how rebellious or negative they may appear to be?

Jesus, to me, personifies unconditional love, that unconditional love which we all need to receive and to give to others, and as teachers that unconditional love which our students also need to receive from us and learn to give others. This is Jesus, the love of salvation which came down upon earth and reaches out to all mankind, even the lowest, and then by means of truth—the Christ—raises us up (Matthew 18:10,14; *True Christian Religion* 298; *Apocalypse Explained* 460:2).

Do we, as Jesus did, willingly seek to touch the leper, heal the sick, give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf? Do we, as teachers, see reaching out and loving each and every student as a first and prior responsibility, willingly undertaken, and even ahead of our need or desire to teach the truth?

By placing love ahead, I by no means belittle or exclude the responsibility for the teaching of truth, the maintenance of order, the establishment of rules. But love is the reason why these are important (*Arcana Coelestia* 5703). This reason should be seen and understood by our students, to whatever degree they may perceive it, but it should also be palpably felt and sensed in all our contacts with them, both individually and in the classroom (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 1). And the older they get the deeper their sense of our acting from love first needs to be. Our loving example is an incredibly powerful teacher, and if this is not truly sensed by the student, every word we say is lost.

Each new state a child comes into is a gift from the Lord—a new chance to develop his character in preparation for the life that leads to heaven. What is our attitude about this? Do we willingly accept these changes of state as the student both desires and needs to act more and more from him self? Do we see these as wonderful opportunities to help children grow and expand or do we regret their growing up, resent their new independence, especially when, as they must in order to really grow, they make mistakes? And most destructive of all, do we allow this sphere of resentment, and even anger, to pervade our classrooms and our daily contacts with students? Does it make us negative to their challenges rather than regarding them as new opportunities to reach out and touch, to appreciate their struggle, to offer first our unconditional love and only when the receptive moment comes, to teach the truth? What kind of example do we want to be? Think of Jesus.

By tradition and for good and sufficient reason, we in the New Church and thus in our schools use the name Lord almost exclusively. For example, we may read a story from the Gospels where the name Jesus is most certainly the only name used—but in drawing a lesson from the story, or in questioning the students we immediately switch,

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and ask: “What did the Lord do?” Would it not be better for the contextual meaning and for the listener’s state to use the same name, Jesus, in any discussion which follows?

I feel sure this would help us and our students to become more comfortable with the use of the name Jesus. And I would venture to suggest many would then find the Lord more approachable as Jesus: a Man who walked on earth as we do, who could come down and help us where we are, someone real we could really touch and who could personally touch us, both directly and through the neighbor. For do not the Gospels teach that we only find the Lord through Jesus? (*Apocalypse Explained* 10)

“Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

*Arcana Coelestia* 3004; *Apocalypse Revealed* 960, 961; *True Christian Religion* 114; *Spiritual Diary* 531.

That “Jesus” in the internal sense is Divine good, and that “Christ” is Divine truth may be seen from many things in the Word. That “Jesus” is Divine good comes from the fact that “Jesus” means “safety,” “salvation,” and “Savior”; and because it means these, it signifies the Divine good; for all salvation is from the Divine good which is of the Lord’s love and mercy; and thus is effected by the reception of that good (*Arcana Coelestia* 300).