

PART ONE

Teachers and their Relationship with Students

*In order to succeed in the very difficult task of effectively educating young people, a teacher truly must possess certain qualities.*

Gentleness *(continued)*

Teachers filled with meekness can show an interest and affection for young people that will win hearts. In class such teachers treat students with politeness, answer their questions with patience, and help keep students from punishments as much as possible by keeping them out of situations that are likely to lead them to misbehavior and punishment.

*Gentleness permits teachers to endure all the adversities and unpleasant experiences and occurrences that go hand in hand with schooling.*

Gentle teachers will never be seen to inflict punishment when they are overly angry and upset. They will never push to the limit a student who is ready to react with anger and an outburst. Since these teachers are more disposed to reward than to punishment, whenever someone guilty of an offense wishes to return to a positive relationship, they pardon the student and show even more respect and friendship to the student than before. Gentle teachers also look upon school as their mission. Far from being a source of boredom and disappointment, classes become a real pleasure. This simply supports the statement of the wise person who said, "Do everything with gentleness and you will attract not only the respect but the love of other people."

Teachers who have drawn such gentleness from Jesus Christ will be blessed and happy. They will truly be the important people in their school, and they will cause Jesus Christ to be the important person there. Loved by their students and respected by the parents, who will be so happy to have found such excellent teachers for their children, they will be rewarded with blessings from the entire school community and will go through life "doing good works." Their memory will remain engraved upon the hearts of those students whom they have brought to the fullness of Christianity, and they will be a model to imitate and an example to follow.

Sad results flow from teachers who lack these qualities. Teachers who make no effort to acquire the gentleness of mind and heart that was recommended by Jesus Christ are really to be pitied. In their classes, they are annoyed and angered over every little thing. They shout, talk harshly, and carry on in all kinds of ways. Their rude and harsh approach intimidates and frightens students without their realizing that these actions can compromise them in the eyes of their students and the students' families. They injure their students by making fun of their inadequacies, or their families, or their ethnic background. They call their students names. They impose exaggerated and unjust punishments on some; they require of others assignments and duties beyond the range of their abilities or experience. They cause students to lose a love of learning and to develop a distaste for school. Such conduct on the part of teachers earns them scorn and dislike; students try to find all kinds of ways of getting away from them and look for all kinds of ways to displease them. Not only will these teachers be unable to bring students to the fullness of Christianity, but they will also be unable to give students the knowledge and the instruction that are owed them. It would have been better if such teachers had never entered a classroom and attempted the difficult art of teaching.

