

PREVENTATIVES

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The title of this article is a derivation of prevent. Webster defines the word *prevent* to mean “to be in readiness for (as an occasion): to meet or satisfy in advance: to get ahead of: to arrive before: to deprive of power or hope of acting or succeeding: to keep from happening or existing: to hold or keep back: hinder, stop: to interpose an obstacle” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*).

The study of polio, mumps, measles, influenza, etc. vaccinations would be classified in the area of preventive medicine. Vaccinations, therefore, are for the purpose of depriving the germ or virus of the power to succeed in infecting its host.

As surely as there is preventive medicine for the physical body, there is preventive medicine for the spiritual being. The Great Physician spent much of His earthly ministry vaccinating the disciples against persecution, false teachers, hypocrites, etc. (Mat. 5:11, 12; 7:15- 20; 6:16). The apostles who had been vaccinated spent much of their time, blood, sweat, heartache and tears in vaccinating the church against infectious error (Acts 20: 28-31; Phi. 3:2; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:3-5). We would do well to receive these vaccinations of love lest we find ourselves unprepared to deal with Satan’s efforts to infect us with sin when they appear (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:13; 1 The. 5:22).

There will always be those spiritually weak, insipid, unwise and short-sighted brethren who believe that one should not preach against the errors of such things as denominationalism, women exercising dominion over men, the divided worship assembly, the error of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church, turning the worship of the church into a three ring circus to entertain the assembly, and a host of other errors infecting the church today. To this present hour unqualified men in the position of elders attempt to justify such a false view by teaching that unless the congregation is having trouble with such things there is no use to mention them much less preach against them. Such a position has no Biblical foundation and is directly opposed to the Biblical idea of being forewarned is to be forearmed. This false view itself must also be exposed and refuted.

If people of this stripe had the same attitude about physical vaccinations as they do about spiritual ones it would be a ridiculous and sorry world indeed. I am thankful that my parents did not have that attitude when it came to the polio vaccine.

Over a century ago brother Moses E. Lard gave this timely warning that will never be outdated:

The prudent man, who has the care of a family, watches well the first symptoms of disease. He does not wait till his wife is helpless, and his children prostrated. He has learned that early cures are easy cures, while late ones often fail. On this experience he resolutely acts, and the world applauds his wisdom. Why should not this same judicious policy be acted upon in the weighty matters of religion (Moses E. Lard, “The Work of the Past—The Symptoms of the Future”, *Lards Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 3 (April, 1865), pp. 251-262. As quoted in *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Earl West, Vol. II, 1950, Cushing-Mallory, Ann Arbor)?

Then, as now, many brethren refused to see the importance of the Biblical sentiments of Lard, and the church of that day suffered greatly for it. Today the Lord's church is in the tight grip of a terrible apostasy that has been going on for years and shows no sign of abating. More and more churches are turning back to the beggarly elements of human denominational religion and worldliness. Much of this digression could have been prevented if forty years ago brethren would have received the spiritual vaccinations of those who boldly sounded out the first symptoms of the spiritual errors that greatly infect the body of Christ today. But, sadly, it was not to be. Thus, we must reform and regroup the remaining remnant of faithful saints and press on. The victory is ours, but would it not be wonderful if more of our brethren were as spiritually prudent in the care of God's family as at least some of them are in the care of their own bodies and those of their physical families?~