







# God's Plan and Me

BOOK II

## HOW TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE

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*Why Do People Not See the Bible Alike?*

GOD'S PLAN AND ME, BOOK I—

*Jesus' Mission and Method*

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## DEDICATION

THIS BOOK is sincerely and prayerfully dedicated to every honest person who is earnestly seeking the truth of his God and whose sincerity inclines him to pause here and pray that what he may glean from the thoughts that follow may lead him more fully into the truth and that he may be guarded against any distracting or misleading influence that may be hidden among them.

## FOREWORD

This book is the culmination of a Bible course that the author has taught at David Lipscomb College for the past thirteen years. The purpose of the course and also of the book is to give to those who will read it prayerfully a more meaningful and, hence, a more practicable understanding of God's teaching as it concerns man's eternal destiny. An effort has been made to present the Bible teaching as it relates to man's nature and needs and becomes functional in his life through the basic principles with which God endowed man in the beginning. (Additional background information about this course may be found in Book I of this series.)

This book has been written for thinking people. It will profit only thinking people. If you are afraid to think on religious matters, if you are too indifferent to think, if you are too indolent to think, or if for any reason you are unwilling to think, you have read far enough. On the other hand, if you have to recognize thinking as the mother of all improvement, if you are big enough to do your own thinking, if you have the moral stamina to make your own decisions and accept the consequences, if you have learned that in religion you must accept personal responsibility for the decisions you follow whether you make them or accept them from others, if you have become humble enough to take the Bible as your standard by which to judge all matters of religion, then read on. You will find the material



before you both interesting and profitable. As you read, please be charitable toward my weakness of speech, my failure to express the ideas as you would, or my failure to express the ideas that you hold, but be merciless toward any teaching that you carefully measure by the Bible and find that it does not agree with it. Be merciless toward the erroneous teaching, but be Christian toward the teacher. I would be grieved should my effort to help people to a better life be the occasion of one stooping to unchristian behavior.

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge valuable contributions to my training and Bible knowledge by a host of esteemed associates including my patient instructors, and also helpful encouragement from many friends including the students in my Bible classes. I am especially appreciative of the patient untiring efforts of Miss Rachel Alexander in checking the references and preparing the manuscript.

THE AUTHOR

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,  
but the end thereof are the ways of death  
(Prov. 16:25).*

## LESSON 1

### INTRODUCTION

**DEAR READER:**

Since this is the most important subject upon which man has ever dared to write; since a correct understanding of this subject is of more value to you (and to me) than all of the other knowledge that you possess or that you may even hope to possess; since there is more misunderstanding and confusion over this subject by honest, sincere religious people than over any other topic that has ever been presented to man's thinking, I am taking the privilege of addressing these introductory statements to you personally in the form of a letter hoping and praying that I may encourage you to give prayerful consideration to the pages that follow.

The importance of this topic to you can only be measured by your evaluation of eternal life. If you have failed to find a genuine interest in the topic, it is evident that your concept of eternal life has been lacking in realism. If this is the case, it is the result of one of two things—either you do not believe the Bible teaching on the subject, or you have failed to give real meaning to the concept by relating it to life's experiences. If your difficulty lies in the lack of faith, and this is the difficulty with most people, you need to spend more time weighing the evi-

dence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God for upon this testimony rests the only assurance of a life beyond the grave. Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John repeatedly, honestly and prayerfully for in this is to be found the true power of the gospel. If your trouble lies in your failure to establish a comparative evaluation of eternal life by relating it to other values which experience has built into your system of values, you need to vitalize it by giving it a functional place among those things that determine your interests, direct your efforts, and control your behavior. This can be done only by comparing it with other things of value.

It is not too surprising that many people fail in their evaluation of eternal life when we observe how many underestimate the value of this life until they are faced with the immediate likelihood of losing it. They received it without personal effort or financial expenditure, hence, have no objective measure of its evaluation. As long as people are in reasonable health they will neglect the care of their bodies, abuse them by unhealthful indulgence and subject them to unnecessary risks; but when the physician tells them there are only six weeks of life remaining it becomes very precious and every possible care will be exercised to extend it. In fact, it is more valuable than any other possession and there is nothing that would not be gladly given up to extend it. It becomes so important that if the physician indicates that they must give up the habit of smoking or drinking coffee or whiskey, it will be done even though they have repeatedly declared that they could not do it. I have never seen a man or

woman who was still possessed of average control who would not give up anything and everything necessary to prolong life. In reality when life is gone all other earthly values are reduced to zero.

Unfortunately your true evaluation of eternal life is dependent upon your evaluation of this life for if life has not become important to you the extension of it into eternity has little attraction. Thus, if you would grasp the meaning of eternal life, you must become vividly aware of the brevity of this life for the more you are impressed with the fact that this life will soon be gone the greater will be your appraisal of eternal life. The greater appraisal of eternal life the more you desire it and the more you desire it the more careful effort you will make to learn how to inherit it.

If, for any reason, you do not feel vitally interested in making sure of the correctness of your instruction on how to inherit eternal life, I beg you to awake to the reality of the brevity of life as revealed in God's word and not wait to be taught it through the stern reality of experience. "For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:14). The more you realize the truth of James' description of life the greater will be your need of a life beyond this one and the more earnest care you will exercise in making sure of your inheritance.

This topic is not only important because of the greatness of eternal life but because of the terribleness of eternal death. The blessings and glories of heaven appear even greater when contrasted with the punishment that

awaits those who fail to inherit them. This contrast is tersely drawn by Jesus as he closes his description of the judgment scene. "And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46). Have you ever thought of the judgment scene as one that you will take part in? Do you realize that if you fail to inherit eternal life you will go away into eternal punishment? What would eternal life be worth to you then? Jesus reminded the Jews of the anguish of such an experience in these words, "There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without" (Luke 13:28). Can you afford to be careless or neglectful of that which is so vital to you? Can you be too careful in dealing with a thing that is so valuable to you?

May I plead with you to recognize more fully the importance of this matter and to use the same wisdom and prudence in dealing with it that you commonly employ in the ordinary affairs of life. The greater the thing you seek to accomplish the greater the effort you willingly make, and the greater the care you exercise to be sure you do the right thing in the right way. You might go out alone to fly a kite before making any particular effort to learn how to do it but you would never propose to fly a plane alone without complete instructions and careful training. Why? You answer, "There is too much at stake." Right you are! In this matter of eternal inheritance there is too much at stake for you either to carelessly drift along through life or to energetically pursue your religious

activities without being doubly sure that you are trying to do the right thing in the right way.

Oh, I know that some people would have you believe that you can inherit eternal life with very little effort on your part or with practically no instruction from God's word. Confess Jesus as the Christ and accept some form of religion with little need of forsaking your selfish manner of life or little obligation to honor God's word by learning, doing, and teaching it. It would appear that holiness, earnestness, and diligence in things that pertain to God are fine but not essential. And, of course, you should be conscientious in what you do but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is a law of liberty and, therefore, if you do not want to do what is written you may leave it undone or do something else, especially if you think it is just as good. If this is true, what do the following Biblical statements mean? "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7: 13-14). "And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved? and he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23-24). "So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if

ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11). "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Pet. 2:1-2).

Do these statements suggest that little effort is needed? Why will many take the broad way to destruction? Why did Jesus plead with people to "strive to enter by the narrow door" and declare that many "shall seek to enter and not be able" if it is easy? Why did Paul exhort the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" if it is easy? Why did Peter urge people to "give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure" if it is easy? And why did he exhort people to "long for the spiritual milk . . . that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" if we do not need it? May God grant you a fuller understanding of the greatness of the eternal inheritance and the importance of a prayerful study of how to obtain it.

This is a subject of vital concern to you personally. It matters not who you are, what your religious conviction or your church relationship if you sincerely want to inherit eternal life you are realistically interested in this discussion. This is not a treatment of the topic, "What must I do to be saved?" in the narrow sense in which this wording is most commonly used, or "What must the alien sinner do to have his sins forgiven" or, "How to become a

Christian or how to become a member of the body of Christ." What we want to know is "How to inherit eternal life," how to be among those on the right side of the judgment seat who will hear the call, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Anything short of this is too short. I am not interested in it, neither are you.

To be sure our study will include some consideration of becoming a Christian, forgiveness of sin, worship, moral living, church membership, repentance, baptism, faith, etc., but only as they fit into the broader discussion of how to inherit eternal life. It is my conviction that the discussion of such topics in the dissected manner in which it has frequently occurred has done much to add to the confusion in the religious world and probably on many occasions has definitely contributed to individual misunderstanding.

Whether or not you agree with the conviction that has just been expressed, it is my hope and prayer that you do see a need for a careful study of the question and a personal application to yourself. If Christianity has come to mean to you what it did to the apostle Paul, I am sure that you consider it necessary to continue your effort in seeking guidance in your Christian work and service and that you join him in his declaration, "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).



I am fully aware of the fact that you, like millions of others, have your own answer to this question and consequently may not consider this discussion vitally important to you. Unfortunately, however, the chances are more than equal that it is "your" answer but "not God's" answer. This statement, to be sure, is not founded upon personal knowledge of you and your answer but is based upon the statistics of the case. There are more answers to this question of how to inherit eternal life than to any other question with which I am acquainted, notwithstanding the fact that men generally agree that there is one God and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom God revealed one teaching giving one answer to this question.

Since the ultimate goal of every person who calls himself a Christian is the inheriting of eternal life, it is reasonable to assume that the religious ideas which he holds constitute his answer to this question. This being the case, there are as many different answers to this question as there are different religious ideas supported by conviction. These religious differences, as they are commonly referred to, are of two classes. There are some that have separated people into their respective church groups that are spoken of as denominational differences; while there are others toward which people seem to be more tolerant that are held by members within the same church group or among religious people without respect to denominational affiliation. Of the first class, there are more than two hundred and fifty differences as evidenced by the fact that there are more than two hundred and fifty denominations in America today. Thus, in this class

there are more than two hundred and fifty answers to the question. Of the second class, the number is legion. If you desire evidence of this statement, go into any church group you like and begin asking the individual members what they believe about practices other than those that have been especially emphasized by that denomination as a part of its distinctive doctrine and you will be surprised at the lack of agreement you will find. In view of the variety of possible combinations among these diverse ideas, both denominational and individual, the number of answers to the question how to inherit eternal life is evidently well above five hundred and nobody knows how many more.

I am not saying these things because I like to draw ugly pictures or to condemn people with any feeling that in so doing I exalt myself. I realize full well that the principle of the seesaw is not the principle of man's spiritual development. I cannot exalt myself by debasing others, but God will exalt me if I will but recognize his goodness, power, and wisdom with that degree of reality that will cause me to feel my littleness, helplessness, and ignorance of that which is good, sufficiently to lead me to dethrone or deny myself as Jesus taught (Matt. 16) and to enthrone him as my Lord and to seek continuously his guidance and blessings. The same is true in your case.

May I say further that I in nowise pose as an authority in matters of religion, neither do I make any claim to infallibility. I never accept the statement of any human being as authority in things that pertain to God, nor would I ever advise you to do it. There is one source

from which we must learn how to inherit eternal life—the Bible. And the man who will knowingly or carelessly allow that source to become adulterated by confusing it with human ideas is being exceedingly neglectful and indifferent toward life's greatest opportunities. In my dealing with this subject I shall not consciously at any time make any effort to influence your decision upon any point by quoting the Biblical interpretation of any human being. The Bible teaching will be submitted to your understanding and conscience as honestly and fairly as one of my human limitations may be able to do.

There is another factor which has a very vital influence with you relative to the consideration of this topic, "How to Inherit Eternal Life." You not only have your own answer to the question, but you are satisfied with your answer. You feel that you are right. You believe that it is the Bible answer. This means that you are very likely to have little interest or concern for another answer, or would be inclined to measure the validity of it by the one which you already possess. These statements are not made about you as personal statements, neither are they intended to imply that you are possessed of personal weaknesses that are unknown to others. In fact, these are failings that are common to humanity.\* The preceding statements have been made as a personal reminder that you have not fully escaped their influence; neither have I. Somehow it is regularly customary for a human being to make every reasonable effort to adjust himself

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\*See *Why Do People Not See the Bible Alike?* Lectures III, IV, V.

to the circumstances and conditions with which he is surrounded and it is perfectly natural that such a practice extend to the field of ideas upon which one's convictions are based.

This tendency to become satisfied with our religious ideas is not only rooted in human nature but also is encouraged by social influence. Many of our friends and relatives, those in whom we have confidence, agree with us in our religious ideas. Not that all people thus related to us endorse all of our religious ideas but we can always find some friend or person in whom we have confidence that will endorse any idea which we hold. The fact that one particular person is not in agreement with all of our religious thoughts seem to give us little concern since we live in the midst of such a mass of conflicting religious ideas all about us. When one in whom we have confidence fails to agree with us on some point we very readily remove the pressure of such disagreement by attributing to him some human weakness that would bias his judgment on that point and never recognize the fact that in so doing we may be projecting our own human weakness into our explanation. At any time when you find consolation in the fact that some of the people in whom you have confidence agree with you on some religious practice, do not forget that the existing ignorance of the Bible makes it possible to find respectable people somewhere who will agree with practically any religious idea.

This is partly illustrated by the manner in which sermons are received. Frequently when a sermon is delivered it is praised very highly by some, received indifferently

by others and censured by a third group. What makes the difference? It is because the thoughts presented were in agreement with ideas held vital by the first group, were not particularly related to the interests and practices of the second group and were contradictory to ideas considered personally valuable by the third group. This explains the fact that any sermon presented enthusiastically to a large audience is likely to be complimented by somebody, but like the case of the friend that agrees with you it is not necessarily evidence that the idea is correct or good. This will depend upon the soundness of the individual's judgment or the correctness of his Bible knowledge. An honest compliment merely indicates that the person agrees with you.

The fact that you are satisfied with your ideas on the subject, "How to Inherit Eternal Life" should not be taken as evidence that they are correct. Of this we have unmistakable warning in the record of the New Testament. Saul of Tarsus was satisfied with his answer. When he was persecuting the Christians from city to city, having them arrested, imprisoned, and put to death, he believed he was right. In fact, there was not a doubt in his mind that he knew what he ought to do and was pursuing the course that would make him an heir of eternal life. Of this he bears testimony. "Though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13). In saying he did it ignorantly in unbelief, he does not mean that he did not believe he was doing right, but that he had refused to believe the

right answer that had been revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ and was being taught by those who had received that teaching. This is responsible for every practice that deviates from the right answer to this question. As further evidence that Saul believed or thought he was right, we turn to his testimony before Festus when he said, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them" (Acts 26:9-10). Saul not only believed that he was right or thought he was right, but he felt that he was right, his conscience bearing testimony to his deeds. When Paul was before the Jewish council he declared, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1). Within this period was included the time when Paul persecuted Christians. Yes, Paul believed he was doing right; he thought he was following the right course; he felt that he was right, to learn later that he was in direct opposition to that which was right.

Since Saul was so radically wrong in his answer to the question, how to inherit eternal life and yet so confident that he was right, is it not a warning to us of the danger of accepting our state of satisfaction as an indication that we are right? By the use of this example there is no intention to suggest that your incorrect answer to the question is diametrically opposed to the truth as was Saul's, and yet there is something in common between the two.

Saul's misunderstanding resulted in the physical death of many of the followers of Christ, and may have caused some people to turn away from him. Your failure (or mine) to have the correct answer to this question will not likely result in the physical death to anyone, but might result in the loss of your soul and also in the souls of many others who are influenced by you and who follow in the same error, even the souls of friends and relatives for whom you most earnestly desire the best. Surely this is enough to cause any serious person to check and double check his answer to make sure that it is correct.

There is one other warning against accepting the fact that you are satisfied as evidence that you are right that should be called to your attention. This was given by Jesus himself during his personal ministry. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23). In this statement Jesus makes it clear that there are people who hold the wrong answer to the question how to inherit eternal life that are going to continue to hold that answer throughout their earthly career. They will even appear before the judgment bar of God to make their plea for an eternal inheritance upon the basis of religious ideas and practices that they have followed because they were satisfied with their own answer and it was not God's answer. You notice from Jesus' statement that he is not speaking of people who have ignored God's teaching completely or who have

refused to have anything to do with religion, but rather of people who have actually prophesied or taught in his name and who had been permitted to cast out demons in his name. This seems to me to suggest that even some of the religious accomplishments of a person cannot be taken to indicate that he is following the right answer to this question. It should be observed also from Jesus' statement that there are going to be many such people and that they will make their plea on the ground that they have been religious people. This implies that while they were living upon the earth they were content with their religious efforts but will learn in that great day that they have never been pleasing to Jehovah as Jesus declared that they will hear the proclamation, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Can you imagine the feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, and despair that will confront those people when they learn that all of their religious effort has gone for nought? Can you or I afford to allow our personal pride to exalt ourselves to that feeling of self-sufficiency by which we are blinded to our personal failures and are disposed to defend our religious ideas and practices rather than to re-examine them?

I am in nowise saying that you would claim that your religious ideas and practices are perfect. There are probably few, if any, who would make such a claim. Theoretically you probably will admit that your knowledge of the Bible is incomplete and that your ability to practice even that which you know is lacking in its effectiveness, yet you are accepting it in that you continue in the same



rut, making no honest effort to do better or to learn more. These statements do not mean to suggest that our God expects of us perfection. If that were true, it would be a hopeless case, but there is every reason to believe that he expects an honest effort on our part not only in doing what we know to do but in learning what he would have us to do and how he would have us to do it. We should never forget that we honor God just as much through the effort we make in being careful to learn the way of righteousness as in doing those things that we have learned.

May God give you a more vivid and realistic conception of the eternal inheritance and bless you with the sincerity, honesty and seriousness of purpose that will lead you to an earnest, conscientious and prayerful consideration of the lessons that follow. May they come to you as an honest effort, of one who loves your soul, to set forth the truth in the love of the truth. May you find time to evaluate what is said by the Bible teaching and follow Paul's advice to the Corinthians, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Cor. 13:5). Do not gamble with your future. Your eternal destiny is too important to you to allow it to be determined by chance—by the chance that you already know how to inherit eternal life and that you are faithfully pursuing the right course. The eternal inheritance that may be yours is too great to be lost by carelessness or indifference, or by blind confidence in the teaching that you have accepted in childhood or without sufficient knowledge of the Bible to be able to choose between truth

and error, or by over self-confidence in your ability to have learned all that you needed to know, to have remembered it through the years and to have guarded its integrity from the influence of your own human weaknesses and the confusion of the religious world in which you live. I beg you to awake to your own personal need and to prepare more carefully for your own personal happiness.

One who seeks your good, not your goods,

*J. Ridley Strop*

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 1

1. What three facts are pointed out in justification of addressing these introductory statements to the reader personally?
2. The importance of this topic to you can only be measured by what?
3. If you are not interested in this topic in what is your concept of eternal life lacking?
4. If your concept of eternal life is lacking in realism, of what may this be the result; and how may it be improved in either case?
5. Why do many people fail in their evaluation of this life and consequently of eternal life?
6. Your vivid awareness of what will increase the care you will use in learning how to inherit eternal life?
7. By what figure does James impress the lesson? (the brevity of life)
8. What besides the greatness of eternal life makes this topic important to you?
9. Why should you be unwilling to fail to be doubly sure that you are doing the right thing in religion?

10. What would some people have you believe about the way to inherit eternal life?
11. Give some statements from the Bible that are not in agreement with the idea that little effort is needed?
12. Why is this subject of vital concern to you personally, regardless of your religious conviction or your church relationship?
13. How will the narrow topics such as forgiveness, worship, and repentance be considered?
14. What may cause you not to be interested in this discussion?
15. Give evidence of the likelihood of your answer being incorrect in some respect?
16. What is pointed out as not being the principle of man's spiritual development?
17. On what condition will God exalt me?
18. What is the only source of authority in dealing with the question of how to inherit eternal life, and what should never be accepted as authority?
19. What other factor tends to discourage your interest in this question?
20. What social encouragement do we have toward being satisfied with our answer to the question?
21. Before finding too much consolation in the fact that some people agree with you on a religious idea, what should you not forget?
22. What only does a sincere compliment of a sermon indicate?
23. Whose experience should warn us against accepting the fact that we are satisfied with our ideas, as evidence that they are correct?
24. What may there be in common between your misunderstanding in regard to how to inherit eternal life and Saul's that should cause you to check and double check your answer?
25. What warning does Jesus give against accepting our own satisfaction as evidence that our answer is correct?
26. How can we honor God just as much as doing the things that we know to do?
27. What possible ways are suggested by which you may lose your eternal inheritance?

## LESSON 2

### “THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE”

The words of the title of this lesson are the words of Jesus addressed to a lawyer. They constitute a divine endorsement of the answer to the question, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” May we now turn to the text from which this statement is taken for his answer.

“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:25-28). What did Jesus say do? Love God and love man. And what would be the result? “Thou shalt live,” or thou shalt have eternal life. In brief this is the instruction on how to inherit eternal life. This is the condition upon which man will be saved. This is the gist, the very heart of Christianity. Any teaching among us of which this is not the very core, which is not pervaded by this attitude and which is not in complete fulfillment of such a life is certainly defective and if taught in the name of Christ is a distortion, being a misrepresentation of the truth.

This is further reinforced by the other part of Jesus' answer. In reply to the statement made by the lawyer, Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right." What does this mean? First, it indicates that nothing wrong or incorrect is included in the answer. No spurious teaching has been given. There is nothing false in the instruction. Therefore, all that is included is a necessary part of the answer. We must love God and we must love man whatever that means. Any change in that would make the answer wrong. Second, in order for an answer to be right, it must be complete; it must be comprehensive in its character. This does not mean that every detail must be stated or that every behavior must be minutely described. But it does mean that the very character of every practice that may be included in the detailed instructions is given in this answer and that every practice in view of the circumstances involved is demanded by the comprehensive answer that has been stated. Not only must every practice taught as a part of Christian teaching be in complete harmony with this answer, but no practice under any circumstance should ever be emphasized in such a manner as to cause it to become detached from man's true obligation to love God and his fellows. If such should happen, the practice becomes an end in itself and degenerates into a mere form.

Referring again to the text quoted above, we learn that the question was asked by a "certain lawyer" and for the purpose of "making trial" of Jesus. This, however, casts no reflection whatsoever upon his answer for what Jesus said in answer to a question was always correct in so far

as his statement was made and when he proposed to answer the question itself, he evidently gave the best answer. In this case, we observe that Jesus did not answer the lawyer's question directly but rather asked a question which produced the answer. Why did Jesus use this indirect method? Some people seem to think that it was because Jesus knew the lawyer's purpose and sought to avoid any charge being brought against himself. This seems to be a very unreasonable explanation of the matter. This is not a necessary inference. It is one that is out of harmony with the facts. Why should the Son of God who had all power, who could have called legions of angels to his assistance, have feared the designs of men? Why should Jesus who had on former occasions, when men sought to do him bodily harm, simply walked through the midst of them and disappeared (Luke 4:30) have feared what men might do? Why should the Son of God with his store of divine wisdom have a fear of being taken advantage of by man? If you were in a community of Pygmies and knew without a doubt that you had more power and wisdom than all of them combined, is it likely that your actions would have been prompted by fear? It appears more reasonable to believe that Jesus answered the question as he did because by so doing he was able to teach his lesson more effectively. By having his answer read from the law he showed that God had already given the answer to this all important question and by his endorsement of it indicated that it had not changed and that it would not change.

It may be a bit surprising to some people to hear

this teaching on love coming from the law which was given through Moses. Somehow many people have come to associate the teaching on love with the gospel as revealed through Christ in contrast with the legalistic demands of the law given through Moses. Since the ten commandments that were given on Mount Sinai are about all the people think of when they think of the law of Moses and since there is no specific commandment among them to love God or man, it is easy to get this impression. Nevertheless, it is not correct. This record definitely shows that this was not the case, for this lawyer (one who knew the law) not only knew that this teaching on love was a part of the law, but he recognized it as being the answer to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

This lawyer was not the only man among the Jews who had recognized this teaching in the law for we read, "And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacri-

fices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God” (Mark 12:28-34). This scribe expressed the importance of this teaching on love as given in the law by placing it much above all “whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices,” above all the forms and ceremonies of the law. He had learned that one’s attitude is the true measure of the man rather than his acts, that his feeling is greater than the form in which it is expressed, that form in religion or life is a fake without feeling and that feeling gives the true meaning to form. Jesus in recognition of the discreetness of his answer commended him by declaring, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

Unfortunately many of the scribes and leaders among the Jews did not subscribe to this idea, or else they held it only theoretically, for which they were condemned by Jesus. He said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone” (Matt. 23:23). “But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Luke 11:42). And it is equally unfortunate that there are many people who call themselves Christians today who hold this same teaching theoretically, or who have failed to learn that to love God is the first commandment. On account of this failure there is a proneness among people today to select a few definite



practices, to insist upon them, and to measure all people in their relationship with God by them, apparently completely forgetting that in order to be pleasing in the sight of God these practices must be an outward expression of an inward attitude. Unless they are in reality objective manifestations of a true love for God, they constitute merely a hollow form and are worthless, or in reality may be highly detrimental by becoming a substitute for true Christianity and will fail when the test comes.

The statements that have just been made in nowise imply that there are no detailed practices that are to be earnestly and prayerfully followed. They are rather warnings against substituting a part of the Christian teaching for the whole, substituting the forms of God's teaching for the spirit of the teaching. This is what the Jews were doing, "For ye tithe mint and rue and every herb and pass over justice and the love of God." Jesus did not tell them that it was wrong to tithe these things; he did not tell them to stop tithing these things; in fact, he told them not to leave these things undone but he reminded them that they had "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith." If these statements mean anything, they mean that justice and mercy and faith are more important than the detail practices of Christianity. However, we should not make the mistake of going to the opposite extreme by concluding that the forms or practices given through Christ and the apostles are non-essential because something has been rated more important, for such practices should not be left undone. How

can we love God truly and knowingly dishonor him by disrespecting any of his teaching?

There is another statement made by Jesus that shows the importance of these two commandments, to love God and to love man, in their relationship to the law of Moses, or it might be better to say their place in the law of Moses. One of the Pharisees asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40). Here we have these two commandments quoted again and designated as the great and first commandment and the second commandment in the law followed by the declaration, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." This statement shows the greatness of these two commandments in the law. They were the very heart and core of the whole system of the Jewish religion, or should have been. Without them both the commandments of the law and the work of the prophets were meaningless. These two commandments should govern man in all of his relationships, giving purpose and meaning to all of the separate and individual teachings that detail the activities in those relationships. The failure of the Jews generally to recognize and follow these two "great" commandments caused their failure as God's people, and I fear that the same failure today is going to bring the same results.

In the early part of his ministry Jesus said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-18). In discussing these verses, it is generally pointed out that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy in the Old Testament scriptures relative to himself. This evidently is a true statement, but it also appears that he fulfilled the law as well as the prophets. He fulfilled these two commandments to love God and to love man and in doing this he fulfilled the law. This was consummated by his suffering and death upon the cross at which time the law as to legal status was taken out of the way. (Eph. 2:14-15). In doing this, Jesus not only fulfilled the teaching of the law but also set us the example that we should do likewise. Paul tells us that, "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4). Paul also tells us about this obligation in these words, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. 13:8-10). He states it to the Galatians thus: "For ye, breth-

ren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Gal. 5:13-14). Yes, we are taught to love one another for in so doing we are fulfilling the teaching of the law.

Love is not only the fulfillment of the law of Moses but it is also the fulfillment of the law of Christ. Nowhere do we have this statement made in these words but in the Galatian letter Paul makes a statement that is virtually its equivalent. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). This statement simply depicts love in action. The particular type of burden bearing described in the preceding verse and evidently included in this expression could only be accomplished through love, that of restoring in the spirit of gentleness, the one who had been overtaken in a trespass. How can we ever doubt that one must love in order to live, for love is the fulfillment of all of God’s law. Not only his law as given through Moses but also his law as given through Christ, and we might add his law as evidenced in the lives of the people who were pleasing to him before the time of Moses. In the lives of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Noah, Enoch, and Abel we find an abundant evidence of a love for God although there is no record of their being taught to love God. Love for God was shown through faithful service then as now.

In his first letter to the Corinthian people, Paul shows most clearly and unmistakably that any religion that is not permeated and controlled by love is not Christianity.

In the twelfth chapter of this letter Paul begins his discussion of spiritual gifts showing that they were given to be helpful to all and should foster unity rather than dissension, but the very nature of his discussion implies that they were about to become the source of discord and difficulty. It appears that those great gifts provided for their progress were about to be a hindrance because there was one thing lacking. This Paul sets forth very dramatically in the first three verses of the following chapter of his letter where he makes it clear to them that without love these gifts will amount to nothing and makes it clear to us, if we will but consider, that without love our religion amounts to nothing. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1). Here Paul considers the matter of speaking with tongues which gift the Corinthians seem to have looked upon as one of the greatest. Paul in no way depreciates the gift of speaking with tongues. In fact, he points out that in so doing one was speaking unto God (I Cor. 14:2) and that he was edifying himself (I Cor. 14:4) and if his speaking were interpreted he edified the church (I Cor. 14:5). However, without love all of this would be reduced to empty sound, would be without meaning and without effectiveness. The sounding of brass, or the clanging of a cymbal, has no definite message. We might also observe that the speaking with tongues which Paul describes is evidently the highest form of that gift—speaking with the tongues of men and of angels. The very

highest possible performance would be reduced to a hollowness and a worthlessness without love.

Paul continues to impress his lesson by considering two other spiritual gifts. “And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (I Cor. 13:2). Here Paul proceeds to a stronger statement of his lesson. The gift of prophecy even as it was known among the Corinthians was greater than the gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:5), but Paul’s description here carries it even beyond that—“know all mysteries and all knowledge.” To this Paul adds the gift of faith and suggests its limitless power in the phrase, “so as to remove mountains.” Among the people of Corinth certainly the one who possessed these great powers would be a great man indeed, but with all this without love Paul’s description is just the opposite, “I am nothing.” How much less could one be than nothing? So far as greatness in the sight of God is concerned simply an empty void—nothing.

Paul next expresses his lesson in terms of Christian activities, showing that love is indispensable in the life of anyone who would be pleasing to God. “And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13:3). Here we have the two great fields of Christian teaching and practice presented. The first is man’s behavior relative to his fellow man and the second is man’s behavior relative to God. To give one’s goods to feed the poor is a practice that God has always required

of his people. It is that practice in which one who loves God cannot fail (I John 3:17). It is an objective expression of a Christian's love for his fellow man. It is a true manifestation of the spirit of Christ when it flows from a heart of compassion and loving kindness but without love it would not be pleasing to God and that which should enrich only makes the giver poorer. Paul's statement indicates that though one carries out the practice of helping to feed the poor to the very limit of his ability or capacity not that he is just a liberal giver, if it is not the work of love it will be of no avail. Without love he may bestow all of his goods to feed the poor but it will profit him exactly nothing. It will not be worth a dime.

That portion of Paul's statement relative to man's behavior toward God is just as plain, direct and emphatic and is just as comprehensive in its character. If one were to be so strongly moved in the activity of worship that he would give up himself so completely that he would give his body to be burned which suggests not only sacrifice but suffering but if he have not love it would profit him exactly nothing. From this statement it is evident that it is possible for one to earnestly and zealously comply with many of the activities that represent worship of God to no profit. How can one read such teaching as this and overlook the fact that love is the very heart of God's expectation of man.

In this connection, may I make this very practical suggestion. Since this third verse of the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians is written in the first person, quote this verse to yourself repeatedly every morning as a reminder

of the nature of a true Christian. If you are sincere in your effort to become Christlike, thinking of this verse will encourage your effort by helping you to maintain a Christian point of view in meeting your problems. It will be best to read the verse aloud and give special emphasis to the words, “I,” “my,” and “me” as shown in italics below. “And if *I* bestow all *my* goods to feed the poor, and if *I* give *my* body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth *me* nothing” (I Cor. 13:3).

May we now look at the same lesson presented in another way. Paul declared to the people at Rome, “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). Later he added, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Since we know that Jesus will return only to claim his own and to give to them the inheritance of eternal life, this is a most important truth. These statements identify unmistakably those who are Christ’s and those who are not. Those who are Christ’s have the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of God, and no one else can hope for life eternal. There has been much discussion about the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, etc., and also much confusion about the subject. This appears to be due to the fact that there is no full discussion or description given in revelation. Although such an analysis is lacking, we do have some definite information in regard to the Spirit. Paul tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is and we can be sure that wherever the Spirit dwells its fruit will be manifest. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” (Gal. 5:



22-23). Since love is the first word used in describing the fruit of the Spirit, it is evident that where the Spirit is there is love. These facts might be summed up as follows: if one does not love, he does not have the fruit of the Spirit. If he does not have the fruit of the Spirit, he does not have the Spirit of Christ. If he does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. If he is not Christ's, he is not heir of eternal life. Thus it is evident that one must have the love of God in his heart to be an heir of eternal life.

After leaving Timothy at Ephesus to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, Paul wrote to him stating that, "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5). From this it is clear that the real thing to be accomplished by the charge was not merely to stop the men from teaching a different doctrine but to truly establish them in the power of the gospel which he describes as, "Love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." In fact, this is the real purpose and ultimate goal of all effort to restrain people from teaching error and all effort to bring people to the knowledge of the truth as well. This is a description of the controlling influence in Christian character. It is the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. It is the very "warp and woof" of Christianity. It is what makes Christianity Christian. We must have the love of God in our hearts.

In considering this subject we should not overlook the fact that God's promises are to those who love him. We learn from James that the crown of life has been promised

to those who love him. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him” (Jas. 1:12). Paul refers to it as the “crown of righteousness,” confidently declaring that it is laid up for him and for all who have loved the Lord or loved his appearing. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing” (II Tim. 4:7-8). The kingdom also is promised to those who love him. “Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?” (Jas. 2:5). By the use of a quotation, Paul reminds us of the greatness of the things which God has prepared and that they were prepared for those who love him. “But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9). Not only has God’s preparation been made for those who love him, the crown of life or the crown of righteousness is promised to those that love him, the kingdom promised to them that love, but Paul declared, “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). This is not a promise but a declaration of the fact, a fact which Paul declares is known. It is the fact that

all things are made to contribute to the good of a certain group of people, and the description of that group is that they love God. There has been a great deal of discussion and contention in regard to these people's relationship to God and how they came into this relationship, but these are matters that do not concern us at present. Regardless of the permanency of the relationship or any other question, the fact still remains that the people for whom all things work together for good are those who love God and there is no indication that anyone else is included. If, in any sense, we are disposed to apply this scripture to ourselves, let us be sure that we meet the condition involved. It is to them that love God that all things work together for good.

The importance that attaches itself to our loving God and the Lord Jesus is shown very dramatically in two short statements made by the apostle Paul at the close of two of his letters which set forth his attitude toward the person who loves the Lord and the person who does not. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (Eph. 6:24). "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22). In Paul's judgment, as he is guided by the Holy Spirit, those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are worthy of the grace of God, the great blessings that God has prepared for those who love him while any person who loves not the Lord is fitted to be anathema, that is, accursed and devoted to destruction. Certainly these two statements indicate the two possible extreme positions that man may occupy with respect to the goodness of God

and the difference between the two is to be accounted for in what is described by the word “love.”

If the Bible teaching that has been offered for your consideration on this subject has been dealt with honestly, it is abundantly evident that man’s hope for eternal life must be based upon his love for God and man. Of this, Jesus leaves no room for doubt. He makes it clear that God’s instruction to love God and man was the basic teaching of the law of Moses and that those who knew the law knew this to be the case. He repeatedly testifies that to love God and man are the first and second commandments of the law and declares that upon them “the whole law hangeth and the prophets.” He berates the Pharisees for leaving these greater commandments undone at the same time warning them that the others should not be left undone. He shows that God’s answer to the question. “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” has not changed by advising the lawyer, “This do, and thou shalt live.” Furthermore Paul tells us that love not only fulfills the law of Moses but also the law of Christ. He also shows us that a religion without love is of no profit, and a person without love is without the Spirit of Christ and none of his. He indicates that those who truly love the Lord are worthy of his grace but those who do not love him are fitted for destruction. And with all this we should not forget that the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the kingdom have been promised to those who love God.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON 2

1. Quote the answer endorsed by Jesus when he said, "This do and thou shalt live"?
2. In brief what does Jesus say that one must do to inherit eternal life?
3. What is included and what is not included in an answer that is right?
4. What reason do some people give for Jesus using this indirect method in answering the lawyer's question?
5. What suggests that this answer is an unnecessary inference?
6. What is suggested as a more reasonable answer?
7. How did the lawyer and a scribe witness the fact that the law taught people to love God and man?
8. How did the scribe show the importance of this teaching?
9. How does Jesus show the scribes and Pharisees of his day that love was a part of the law?
10. What do we find among religious people today as a result of their failure to recognize that the first commandment is to love God?
11. Instead of implying that there are no detail practices that are to be earnestly and prayerfully followed, these teachings are rather warnings against what?
12. What mistakes to the contrary should not be made?
13. How does Jesus show the greatness of the commandments of the law to love God and to love man?
14. How did Jesus fulfil the law and the prophets?
15. How are we to fulfill the law?
16. Quote Paul's statement that shows that love is the fulfillment of the law of Christ?
17. What particular type of burden is evidently included in Paul's admonition?
18. What spiritual gifts does Paul use in first Corinthians 13:1, 2 to show the worthlessness of spiritual gifts without love?
19. What two Christian activities does Paul use to show that religion without love was without profit, and in these what two great fields of Christian practice are represented?
20. What is suggested as an aid in your effort to be Christ-like?
21. What does Paul tell us we must have if we are Christ's?
22. How does he describe the fruit of the Spirit?
23. Combine these two teachings to show the necessity of love.
24. What did Paul tell Timothy is the end of the charge?

25. What is the real purpose of all effort to restrain people from teaching error?
26. What makes Christianity Christian?
27. To whom are God's promises made?
28. What things has he promised?
29. To whom do all things work together for good?
30. How did Paul express his attitude toward them that love the Lord and toward those who do not?

## LESSON 3

### YOU MUST LOVE MAN

The purpose of the preceding lesson has been to give the basic Bible instruction on "How to Inherit Eternal Life." Impelled by the conviction that teaching involving the eternal destiny of the souls of men, including my own, from any other source is not only untrustworthy but dangerous, I have made a sincere and prayerful effort to see that the instruction presented is Bible instruction. Furthermore, in view of the existing multiplicity of conflicting ideas that are being taught as Bible instruction on this subject, I have sought diligently for the basic instruction that would be recognized by every honest Bible student who proposes to believe the Bible as fundamental and necessary to every teaching worthy of serious consideration. This essential teaching has not only been sought as a common ground from which to begin our study together but also because the exaggerated emphasis that has been given to distinctive doctrinal teachings of the respective religious groups has caused many people to virtually lose sight of the real core of Christianity and is producing a religion that is becoming increasingly sterile and contributing to conditions that are stifling the true influence of Christianity.

The basic Bible instruction to those who would inherit eternal life may be briefly stated as follows: Love God

and love man. While both parts of this teaching have been discussed in lesson two, the major emphasis has been given to the teaching that we must love God and that a religion without love is not Christianity and therefore is worthless. Now we shall turn our attention to a fuller treatment of the teaching that we must love man. This is not a difficult idea to accept theoretically as it is not in conflict with the denominational doctrines of any religious group nor to the ideas held by individual members of any groups, but it is exceedingly difficult to accept practically as it is in conflict with much of our human behavior. Because of this difficulty and because it is absolutely imperative that the teaching to love man as well as the other principles of Christianity be given their place in the daily living of Christians, it appears necessary that we discuss the matter at length.

This statement that a man must love his fellow man in order to inherit eternal life may sound rather new and unusual but I assure you that it is not new. It is as old as the Bible, and I regret the situation very much if it is considered unusual. I am aware of the fact that it is very infrequently heard in much of our public teaching, while in one group or another we frequently hear such expressions as one must believe, one must be a good moral man, one must be baptized, one must be a member of the church, or must attend worship. I suppose it is natural under the present religious conditions that these other statements emphasizing such practices as necessary parts of Christianity would be more frequently heard because they are matters of varying disagreement. I hope that



this does not mean that God's teaching to love man is being neglected, but the lack of love that is often found among people who call themselves Christians might easily suggest that this is the case. Certainly there is a danger that the teaching about which we hear the most, and talk the most, and think the most will come to be considered the most important. In an effort to offset some of this over-emphasis, I have used this strong form of expression as the subject of this lesson. "You must love man."

Since there are some people who put particular stress upon Bible teaching that is stated in the form of specific commandment, let us observe in the beginning of our study that this is a specific commandment. In fact, it has always been one of God's commandments. We have already observed in a former lesson that it was a part of the law of Moses, the first detailed law of which we have record. Already several quotations have been discussed that make it plain that the first commandment is to love God, and the second commandment is to love one's neighbor. I repeat one quotation as a statement of these facts. "And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:35-39). Prior to the giving of the law of Moses, we have no statement of this commandment, but it is in evidence in the lives of those

who served God. It is easily observed in the life of Abraham and his dealings with his fellow man.

In Jesus' teaching to his apostles he made it plain that they were commanded to love one another. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). On another occasion he said, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Of course, what was Jesus' commandment was God's commandment, for Jesus declared, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16).

One of these apostles to whom this commandment was spoken, even the one who gave us the record of these statements, the apostle John, has also given us statements in his epistles of the fact that this commandment has passed to all Christians and all should love one another. "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another" (II John 5). "For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (I John 3:11). "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:23). This statement not only declares most emphatically that it is God's commandment that we love one another but suggests the vital nature of his commandment by stating it in close conjunction with the commandment that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. In fact, the

two are virtually combined in one, implying that a real faith in Christ will so fill people with the love of God that they will have love one for another.

This inseparable conjunction of love of the brethren and the other most fundamental teachings of Christianity is shown even more clearly by the apostle Peter. He shows love of the brethren to be an inherent result of a true conversion. In describing the conversion of the people to whom he wrote, Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (I Pet. 1:22-23). These people had been begotten by the incorruptible seed, the word of God, the gospel or good tidings. By becoming believers in God, in learning of the resurrection of Christ from the dead and accepting the promise of redemption through his precious blood, they had purified their souls in their obedience to the truth which made them brethren with each other and with all others who had found a common interest in Christ, who loved and sought to honor the same God, who held the same blessed hope, who shared the same persecution and therefore were naturally drawn together to love one another. This Peter encourages with his exhortation, "Love one another from the heart fervently."

The apostle John, in his first epistle, shows the vital place of love of the brethren in one's religion by pointing to its presence or possession as evidence of relationships

or conditions which bespeak its genuine or divine character. He points to one's love of the brethren as evidence that he is begotten of God. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8). Also, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (I John 3:10). John also exhorts the people to whom he writes, "Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth" (I John 3:18), declaring that such a love is evidence that they are of the truth. "Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him" (I John 3:19). And John also tells us, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). This is another way of saying that it is evidence of our true conversion, that our past sins have been forgiven, that we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love, that the word of God has been given a vital place in our lives causing us to love God and to manifest it in our love for those whom God loves, and that we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 1:3), that we may wait for the hope of righteousness (Gal. 5:5). The greatness of this privilege is made even more vivid by reminding us of the condition of the person who does not have this love in his heart, he that loveth not abideth in death (I John 3:14).

John depicts the blessedness of the one who truly loves his brother in another pair of contrasting pictures. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:10-11). John also speaks of this love which we have one for another as evidence that God abideth in us and that we abide in him, and thus we may know of God's presence with us even though we cannot see him. "No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:12-13). These quotations not only leave no doubt that Christians are commanded to love one another, but show beyond question that the very nature of Christianity demands that we love one another.

The basic teaching of all of these statements may be summed up in one short sentence from the record of our Savior's teaching, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:35). Love of the brethren is the mark of discipleship. Anyone who does not love Jesus' disciples cannot himself be one of Jesus' disciples, for anyone who does not love Jesus' disciples does not love Jesus himself. Neither does he love God the Father. John testifies, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). This means if any man

has a real faith in Christ, having become his disciple, he is begotten of God, and that if he loves the Father who begat him, he will also love his brethren who are begotten of the same Father. In God's family the children who truly love him also truly love each other. We have another statement on the matter which leaves no room for an exception. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (I John 4:20-21). This statement should make it clear to you and to me that until we are sure that we love God's people we cannot be sure that we love God and neither should we expect the people about us to think of us as Jesus' true disciples.

We should always remember that church membership is not the mark by which we shall be recognized as disciples of Christ. It matters not which church we are members of, how fine its building, how large its membership, or how vehement its claims of being the true church, the fact still stands that church membership as we know it is not the identifying mark of a true disciple. There is no group mark by which all men will recognize people as disciples of Christ. The real identifying mark is individual. It is a personal characteristic that is truly Christ-like. It is the deep abiding love of the brethren.

It is truly regrettable that, by some people, the emphasis today is being put on church membership rather than upon doing the will of God that we may please him

and be partakers of his nature. This is a shift from Bible emphasis. Nowhere in the Bible is anyone ever invited or urged to become a member of the church, and nowhere in the Bible is there an implication or an intimation that a person should do anything in order to become a member of the church. People are told what to do that their sins may be forgiven (Acts 2:38), what to do in order to be saved (Acts 16:30-31), what to do to inherit eternal life (Luke 10:25-28), what to do that they may be sons of God (Matt. 5:44-45), what to do that they may be unblamable before God at the coming of the Lord (I Thess. 3:12-13), but never what to do to become a member of the church. This does not mean that there was no church, nor that they were not in the church or a part of the church, or members of the church, but it does put the emphasis on individual behavior before God, stressing the fact that we must save ourselves from this crooked generation (Acts 2:40) by putting our trust in God, doing what God teaches us to do, and being the sort of people that he teaches us to be. By doing the things that God, through Christ, has taught us to do, we become followers of Christ or Christians, saints or a sanctified people. By giving heed to Jesus' teaching, we have been called away from a selfish life to live unto him who died for us. We are of those who have been "called out" of the things of this world. Hence, we are a part of the ekklesia or members of the church. Church membership requires not one thing in addition. When one becomes a Christian—does just what Christ teaches—he is a member of the church. He may have complied with

a ritual and be considered a member of the church and not be a Christian, but he can never be a Christian without being a member of Jesus' body or church. In fact, "church" is the group name or designation for people who follow Christ and are individually called Christians. Then let us concern ourselves with the salvation of souls and not merely, or largely, with church membership.

While it is very important that we recognize that love one for another is the characteristic by which all men shall know that we are Jesus' disciples, we should never allow ourselves to misread Jesus' statement and accept the idea that by this shall all men "be" Jesus' disciples. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). This did not mean that love one for another was the only characteristic of Jesus' disciples or that Christianity consisted wholly of people loving one another. It is not merely a socialized religion. If that were true, what would be the basis of their brotherhood? They must be born into the same family in order to be brethren. They must be children of God. To be children of God, they must be Christians or followers of Christ. To be followers of Christ, they must follow Christ's teaching. They must accept his teaching on purification for sin and how to worship God as well as that on loving the brethren. "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear



much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15: 7-8). A disciple must abide in his word or teaching, and bear much fruit. Evidently Jesus’ statement was to convey the teaching that the one outstanding Christ-like characteristic that all men could identify was love one for another or that all else might be confused with the other religions, but that power of Christian teaching that made of them such people that they truly loved one another could not be mistaken.

Also we are told that a fervent love covers a multitude of sins. “Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins” (I Pet. 4:8). The interpretation most commonly given to this verse is to the effect that Christians’ love for each other covers each one’s sins from the eyes of the other and causes them to live much more happily together, but that this has no reference whatsoever to God’s attitude toward the sins of those Christians who love each other. The first part of the statement is undoubtedly true. In the Corinthian letter, Paul shows that love in the hearts of people certainly will cause them to overlook faults in those whom they love. “Love . . . is not provoked, taketh not account of evil” (I Cor. 13:5). The latter part of the interpretation, however, is not necessarily correct. In fact, a careful reading of verse seven with verse eight suggests just the opposite. Here they are. “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins” (I Pet. 4:7-8). In verse seven the apostle

warns that the end of all things is at hand. Regardless of what particular things he refers to in these words, he is using it as the basis of an appeal for greater earnestness in their Christian living; that they be more consecrated in their acts of reverence toward God and in their lives of helpfulness toward the people whom God loves. After exhorting them to be of sound mind and sober unto prayer, Peter shows the great importance of loving the brethren by saying, "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves." "Above all things." Whether we accept this expression in the absolute or not it certainly must be taken to indicate that being fervent in their love among themselves was to be considered more important than being of a sound mind or sober minded and sober unto prayer. Why should this be so? Peter gives the answer to this question as he completes his sentence in the following verses. "Using hospitality one to another without murmuring: according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever" (I Pet. 4:9-11). Briefly put, it means simply that they should be mutually helpful to one another both physically and spiritually that God might be glorified. Why would this be more important in glorifying God than being of a sound mind and sober unto prayer? To this we have the answer in our fore-going discussion. It is because

a fervent love of the brethren is the true mark of discipleship, being the unmistakable evidence of one's love for God.

Is it reasonable that Peter should have given such an exalted place to fervent brotherly love and give as his reason for being fervent in their love one for another the fact that it will cover a multitude of sins and by that mean only that they would be more forgiving among themselves? It appears more reasonable to think that Peter would have used the expression, "cover a multitude of sins" to convey its accustomed meaning. To ascertain this meaning we shall examine its use on other occasions.

It was used by James as follows: "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20). Here it is apparent that James is referring to the pardoning of the sins of the one who had been converted from the error of his way—that God would remember them against him no more. David said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. 32:1-2). Paul quoted this in the fourth chapter of Romans in support of his teaching that men are "justified by faith apart from the works of the law" declaring, "Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works" (Rom. 4:6). It is evident that the covering of sins is again used to refer to God's pardoning of sin through faith in Christ.

When Peter said, "Love covereth a multitude of sins," he likewise meant that because of their fervent love one for another they would enjoy God's forgiveness of sins.

Certainly, this in nowise encourages the idea that acts of love toward each other in anywise become acts of penance that atone for a person's misdoings that have resulted from his carelessness or that have been engaged in somewhat as a matter of privilege. Surely there is no implication whatsoever through such teaching that man can in anywise earn forgiveness of his sins, or the passing over of his sins, or the hiding of his sins from Jehovah apart from the blood of Christ as the atonement for sins and through the favor of God which has been granted unto man in Christ Jesus. On the contrary, Christians' devotion to one another is the true manifestation that they have the love of God in their heart, and in the earnestness of their souls that they are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling knowing that it is God who is working in them. They have the full assurance of the right of forgiveness through Christ not only of the sins of which they repent and make confession but also of the sins of which they have no knowledge.

In the letter to the Hebrews, we have further teaching on this subject. In the latter part of the fifth chapter the Hebrews are reminded of the fact that they are still babes when by reason of time they ought to be teachers. In the first part of the sixth chapter they are warned of the danger of apostasy with its terrible consequences. In the second paragraph of chapter six, the people are given a word of encouragement based upon the fact that

they had shown their love for God in that they had ministered unto the saints and were still doing so. Although they were being warned against apostasy, the writer points to this to show that they still bore the mark of true discipleship. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Heb. 6:9-11). In verses eleven and twelve, he expresses the desire that they show the same diligence even to the end and that they be not sluggish but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. This teaching should in nowise be taken to mean that because these people had done some good deeds to the saints they had earned God's special approval but rather that their ministering to the saints as a part of their Christian living was the manifestation of their love for God which should encourage them to expect God's blessing and to continue in the same diligence that through faith and patience, or steadfastness, they might inherit the promises. This in nowise implies that they have already inherited them or that they could not fail to inherit them. If it were not possible for them to fail, why would they have been given such a warning.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 3

1. Give two reasons for beginning the discussion of "How to Inherit Eternal Life" with this teaching on love.
2. What was given the major emphasis in lesson two and what in this lesson?

3. Why is the teaching that we must love man not difficult to accept theoretically but difficult to accept practically?
4. What is probably the reason that such expressions as, "One must be baptized or one must be a member of the church" are heard more frequently than, "One must love man"?
5. What is the danger with respect to the teaching that we hear the most and talk the most about?
6. Quote evidence that the people under the law of Moses were commanded to love one another.
7. Quote evidence that the apostles were commanded to love one another.
8. Quote evidence that the disciples were commanded to love one another.
9. Show that having a love for the brethren is an inherent result of a true conversion.
10. Of what is our love for one another evidence?
11. In what two ways or senses may love cover a multitude of sins?
12. What can never become acts of penitence?
13. How should the case of the Hebrews ministering unto the saints be interpreted?
14. What does Jesus tell us is the mark of discipleship?
15. Until we are sure that we love God's people what can we not be sure of?
16. What is not the mark of discipleship?
17. What is being given emphasis by some religious people today that is emphasized nowhere in the Bible?
18. Why is it better that we concern ourselves with the salvation of souls than with church membership?
19. What misreading should not be given to John 13:35?
20. What meaning should Jesus' statement convey?

## LESSON 4

### YOU MUST LOVE MAN (Continued)

Now that the fact has been fully and unquestionably established that we must love our brethren if we are to inherit eternal life, are we disposed to follow the example of the lawyer to whom Jesus made it clear that he must love his neighbor? You recall the case of the lawyer as given in lesson two, how that when Jesus sanctioned the teaching from the law that he should love God and should love his neighbor as himself, he desired to justify himself asking, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). In this case do we have a similar desire and would we ask the parallel question, "Who is my brother?" or out of the simplicity and honesty of our hearts would we in earnestness seek the answer to that question that we may have a fuller understanding of the Christian way of life? Whichever may be the case may we make very careful examination of the matter.

Someone might suggest that my brother is one who is truly a Christian, one who has not only accepted the way of righteousness but who is zealous in the pursuit of his Christian duty, one who is upright in life and zealously active in the worship and teaching program of the church, one who has learned to love his brethren and whose love reaches even unto me. Is he alone my brother?

Let us recall a little more of the picture of this relation-

ship in the spiritual family, in the family of God, in the family in which we must be children in order to inherit eternal life. Is it true that all of the children in the family of God are full-grown, or do we not find people in that family of varying spiritual ages and levels of maturity that are somewhat similar to the variations of age and maturity to be found in our human families?

A moment's reflection would tell any Bible student that the latter is the case. People are born into the family of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3, 7). They are spoken of as newborn babes and urged to long for spiritual milk that they might grow thereby unto salvation (I Pet. 2:2). Some are exhorted to be no longer children (Eph. 4:14). These expressions together with the fact that children continue to be born into the family of God as they do in the human family suggest the presence of all ages and levels of maturity from babes to fullgrown. In reality the irregularities of growth seem to be greater spiritually than physically. It was said to the Hebrews, "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe" (Heb. 5:12-13). A similar condition is implied among the Corinthians. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet



carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (I Cor. 3:1-3).

Indeed, we have brethren who are "without experience of the word of righteousness," who are carnal, having jealousy and strife, as well as those who are spiritual. We have those who are selfish, those who are weak, those who have not learned how to meet life's problems as well as those who are more mature. We have those whose zeal is much greater than their knowledge, who are conceited, who are uncooperative, irritable, and at times appear even aggressively antagonistic as well as those who are patient, compassionate and humble. Which are we to love? We are to love all of them. Would it not be a strange situation if I had in my family a brother three years of age whom I refused to love because he had not learned how to do the things that I could do, or if I had a brother thirteen years of age who was somewhat wayward or contentious or self-seeking and because of his failing I had no love for him. Yet I tell you that I am a normal, well-developed, fullgrown individual, What would you say? You would likely say, "There must be a mistake. If you were normal, well-developed, fullgrown, you would be more understanding and considerate. A recognition of his need would lead you to be patient, kind, forbearing and long-suffering and ready to forgive as the occasion demanded. Your attitude would be one of sympathy and pity, not one of resentment or condemnation."

Is it not so in the family of God? If you and I are not

“touched by the infirmities of the weak,” does it not indicate that we are lacking in the Spirit of Christ? If we fail to love those who really need it most, how does the Spirit of Christ dwell in us? And how can we so severely condemn them when we who exalt ourselves are probably more guilty than they? “Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me” (Rom. 15:1-3).

Another thing that should not be overlooked is the fact that spiritual maturity does not always correlate with the time that has passed since birth as closely as physical development does. The spiritual babe frequently is surrounded by conditions that make it much less likely that he will receive the proper food and far more likely that he will be a victim of influences which hinder normal growth. In view of these extenuating circumstances, our spiritual relationship should call for a more sympathetic understanding than our physical relationship. If we are guided by that wisdom which is from above which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy” (Jas. 3:17), instead of being blinded by human conceitedness and misdirected by ill-founded rationalizations, this will be the case.

We should also bear in mind that spiritual maturity does not correspond to physical stature. Probably if it were possible for us to see people in physical forms pro-

portionate to their spiritual statue, we could more easily become conscious of how frail and weak they are and be more ready to pity and to help them rather than to condemn them. Or probably if we could see ourselves similarly represented, we would be humbled to that place where we would seek to serve rather than to condemn.

If it were possible to make a picture of an average congregation spiritually represented in physical statue, it would certainly be an eye-opener. Instead of a group of people that is predominantly adult, we would see one that is largely composed of children. I suspect we would be surprised how many children and how few adults there would be, and probably more surprised how many infants and how few whose maturity is beyond adolescence. It would probably give us a strange feeling to compare such a picture with the picture of the congregation as we see it ordinarily. When we look in the pew regularly occupied by a six-foot, two hundred pound man with gray hair, or probably no hair at all, and find his spiritual statue to be that of a restless, impatient pre-adolescent boy or even that of a baby who has not yet learned to walk or talk, how would we feel? Or should we look in this spiritual picture for a woman of average statue who had already become a mother or even a grandmother and find her appearing as an adolescent girl or as a pre-school child, how would we feel? This is just to remind us that we must not allow ourselves to be misled by physical statue. Regardless of physical size or age, we must deal with spiritual children as children and not as adults. We would not expect an average four year

old child physically to behave like an adult, nor to do the work of an adult. Neither should we expect a person in spiritual infancy to behave like, or do the work of a fullgrown Christian. Should a small child do you wrong, would you become angry or seek to teach him better? Then let us be just as considerate of the spiritually small or immature.

And do not forget that one's spiritual age (the number of years since he accepted Christ) is not as likely to be as correct an index of his spiritual growth as chronological age is of physical growth. There are spiritual Pygmies or dwarfs just as there are physical dwarfs and as is true of the physical, the spiritual are frequently ill-formed or misfigured and should be objects of pity rather than objects of scorn. What would we think of a physician who by patient effort could change a deformed dwarf to a normal individual but refused to do so? Then what about the spiritually strong who fail to bear the infirmities of the weak? And what about those who claim to be spiritually strong who make no effort to help the young or the weak, frail and deformed but rather condemn them harshly? How does the spirit of Christ dwell in them? Then those who consider themselves to be stalwarts should not be so simple-minded that they fail to recognize that those who are living unbecoming lives may be babes "without experience of the word of righteousness," or have been babes so long that they are dwarfs. May God help us to see things as they are and to be helpful to each other, "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a

fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Then let us not forget that we are to love our brethren one and all. Let us fill our hearts with the love of God so that we may become big enough to recognize our littleness and big enough to love each other and bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

Let us examine this teaching to love man a little further. We are not only taught to love the brethren, but we are taught to love all mankind, even our enemies. This is the teaching of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, it was expressed in the word of "neighbor" which seems to have been interpreted by the Jews to mean only a Jew and only one who was a friend. The present day seems to share in a similar application.

In the Roman letter, Paul makes use of this teaching from the law in such a way as to make the term neighbor include everyone. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. 13: 8-10). When Paul says, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another," he is not so much emphasizing the

matter of paying one's debts or meeting one's obligations but by contrast he is pointing out the one obligation that will never be settled. We must continue to love one another. It matters not how much we have expressed our love in the past, we have in nowise lessened our obligations to love in the present and this will be just as true months, or even years hence as it is today.

The Jews had perverted this law by interpreting the word neighbor to mean friends and teaching people to hate their enemies. Jesus corrected this error, giving a teaching that was very much needed by them, and probably just as much needed today. For emphasis, I am quoting both records of this correction. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48). "But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them

not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:27-36).

First, let us observe that this teaching was given by Jesus to his disciples, "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying" (Matt. 5:1-2). Second, let us recognize fully that Jesus teaches us (all of his disciples) to love our enemies and he makes it clear that he does not mean merely the absence of hate, but he says, "Do them good," "bless them," "pray for them." Third, let us perceive clearly that we must practice this teaching that we may be children of our Father who is in heaven, "sons of the Most High." Fourth, let us understand that if we do not love our enemies but love only those who love us, we are doing no more than sinners would do, those who never knew Christ. Even sinners love those who love them; and even the publicans did as much. If we do no better than they, we are no better than they. Thus it is

clear that we must love our enemies in order to be true sons of God and heirs of eternal life.

The lesson was also clearly and emphatically taught by the apostles. Paul exhorted the people at Rome, "Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21). Here we are not only taught not to render evil for evil, according to the practice of men, but always to render good for evil and with this teaching we are given the reason why. We should not render evil for evil for vengeance belongeth unto God, but we should do good for evil that the evil doer may be changed from an enemy to a friend. This is the acid test of one's religion. This is the Christian's way of making the world better, of making his own life happier and of glorifying his Maker. This is the example which was set by our Lord which Peter calls to the attention of servants who were abused by their masters in these words, "For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called:



because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Pet. 2:19-21). Later in his letter Peter addresses the lesson to all the Christians to whom he is writing as follows: “Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (I Pet. 3:9). These statements from Peter make it abundantly evident that loving our enemies to the extent that we refrain from doing them evil and do them good is an essential part of Christianity. For in this, we are following Christ’s example and through this we inherit a blessing. “For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Pet. 2:21), and, “For hereunto were ye called, that you should inherit a blessing” (I Pet. 3:9).

The practice of this teaching in the field of human relationships constitutes one of the major differences between a religion and Christianity. Do you have a religion, or Christianity? Do I have a religion, or Christianity? A religion, if accepted in full confidence, may ease the misguided human conscience and appear to serve man’s personal needs in this life very acceptably, but only Christianity will stand the test in the day of reckoning. Remember Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). He also warned by the words of Isaiah, “But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mark 7:7). Can we afford

to fail to make every reasonable effort to be sure that our religion is Christianity?

As we finish our discussion of the subject, "You must love man," reader, I beg of you not to pass this teaching lightly, but to reweigh it time and again, rereading the Biblical quotations prayerfully, earnestly seeking to give this teaching its true place in proper relationship to all other Bible teaching. Even though it is unmistakably clear that God has commanded those who were to inherit eternal life to love their fellow men, not only the good, the gracious and the lovable, but also the low, the mean and the wicked, not only their brethren but also their enemies, may we not seek to impose it upon ourselves and those whom we have the privilege to teach formally, by virtue of its formal legal authorization, but rather God grant that we may vitalize this teaching in our own lives by recognizing its practice to be the natural and normal expression of the Spirit of Christ which abides in and leads those who are God's children. Let us not propose to love man because we are compelled by the demand of the law, but rather because we are impelled by the Spirit of Christ which dwells within us.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 4

1. Who is my brother?
2. Describe some causes for varying conditions in the family of God.
3. Describe some varying conditions among brethren.
4. Why is spiritual maturity less likely to correlate with the time one has been a Christian as well as physical maturity does with chronological age?
5. What difficulty arises from the difference between spiritual

and physical statue?

6. If a picture could be made of a congregation showing spiritual statue in physical form what changes would we likely find?
7. What influence would it have if we could see spiritual things as they really are?
8. How was loving neighbor interpreted by the Jews?
9. Show how Paul made "neighbor" mean everyone.
10. Give evidence from Jesus' teaching that Christians must love sinners.
11. What is the status of the person who loves only those who love him?
12. Give teaching from the apostles to show that we must love our enemies.
13. What constitutes one of the major differences between a religion and Christianity?
14. Why should we love man, even our enemies?

## LESSON 5

### WHAT IS LOVE?

Since the key word in the instruction on how to inherit eternal life is the word “love,” the question that we are to consider now is a most important question. We have learned that those who will inherit eternal life are those who love God and man. Therefore, if I am going to understand what is required of me, it is imperative that I know what love is. If we ever come to any reasonable understanding of what the Lord expects of us, we must know what love is. By saying that we must know what love is we simply mean that we must understand the word “love” as it is used in the Bible teaching. What is meant by loving God and loving man?

The importance of this word because of its place in the divine instruction as to how to inherit eternal life, not only requires that we make a very careful study of it, but even greater care is demanded by the confusion that has been caused by the wide variety of usages of the word love and the careless and thoughtless remarks that have been made relative to its meaning. They all suggest a phantom like, intangible thing, either implying or stating man’s ignorance of the matter. Some of these descriptive phrases are “love is better felt than told”; “love is a tickling sensation about the heart”; “love is a loss of appetite and a feeling of goneness about the stomach.” Another statement of a little more serious character and

one that has probably caused more people to be satisfied to pass the whole matter without a real desire for understanding it, is a statement that has been echoed from the pulpit. "Nobody knows what love is." Whether this statement is true or not, you may decide as we continue the study. It might be in order, however, to ask this question; is it reasonable to believe that the God of wisdom who made man and knows his limitations as well as his ability, who loved man and wanted him to "be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," would use the word "love" in telling man what to do to inherit eternal life if it were beyond man's capacity for understanding? Instead of discussing further this statement that, "Nobody knows what love is," let us turn to the study of the word itself.

Since our most common method of describing a thing or defining a word is by classifying it with things that are similar and then distinguishing it from the other members of the class, we shall follow the same procedure in this case. To illustrate the matter we will take the definition of the word "chair" as given in Webster's Collegiate dictionary. "Chair, a seat, usually movable, for one person. It usually has four legs and a back and may have arms." The word seat puts this object in a class of similar objects such as stool, bench, divan, sofa, etc. The remainder of the definition distinguishes the chair from the other kinds of seats, "usually movable, for one person," etc.

Now our question is what words name the same general class characteristic as the word love? They are like, ad-

mire, adore, hate, dislike, detest, abhor, etc. What is the class characteristic named by these words? All of these words, though they vary widely in meaning, have something in common. They name kinds of personal feelings or attitudes. When we say that Bill likes John or that Bill hates John, we are telling what sort of personal feeling that Bill has toward John. Likewise, if we say that Bill loves John, we are describing his personal feeling toward him. Therefore, we may safely conclude that the word "love" describes a personal feeling or attitude.

Referring to the definition of chair above, we find it first classified as "a seat," then further description is given by classifying it as "usually movable" in contradistinction to seats that are not movable. This puts it into a smaller class. This may also be done for the word "love." Likewise, personal feelings or attitudes may be further classified into positive feelings and negative feelings. An examination of the list of words given above that describe personal feelings reveals the fact that there are two classes of feelings. Love, like, admire, and adore are feelings that produce actions in favor of the person or thing toward which we have such feelings and may be called positive. Hate, dislike, detest, and abhor are feelings that are expressed in actions that are unfavorable to the person or thing toward which we have such feelings and may be called negative. Man's feelings or attitudes toward a thing or person may vary all the way from strong positive feelings to very strong negative feelings—from adore to abhor. (There may be and probably are many things and people toward which one's feelings are

neither positive nor negative but rather indifferent. We shall not concern ourselves with this neutral zone.)

Also one's positive feelings may vary from very strong to very weak and the same is true of one's negative feelings. That is, one may have a very strong favorable feeling toward a thing or a very mild favorable feeling. He also may have an extremely strong unfavorable feeling or a very mild unfavorable feeling. We have accumulated quite a list of words for designating these variations in feelings. However, these words are used by different people with quite different shades of meaning and although the words have been given fairly clearcut definitions, it is extremely difficult to arrange them in a progressive order that would indicate strength of feeling. In fact, the word "hate" may be used by some people to describe the same feeling that others would describe by the word "dislike." Or the word "like" is often used to express a feeling that others would express by the word "love." In fact, some people use one of these words regularly to express their favorable attitude toward persons or things whether it be strong or weak, while others use the other word in the same way. When I was a child, parents made an effort to teach their children to say that they loved their mama and papa but liked their pie or ice cream when in reality the actual feeling was probably the reverse.

In view of this confusion in the use of words and also due to the fact that the word most commonly used in the Bible to express favorable feelings is the word "love" and that used to express unfavorable feelings is the word

“hate,” we shall not concern ourselves further with the other words. We shall also recognize the fact that these words are used in the Bible to indicate varying degrees of favorable personal feelings and of unfavorable personal feelings. For example, when Jesus was visiting in Simon’s house, he made this statement, “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47). Jesus asked Simon, “Lovest thou me more than these?” (John 21:15). From these quotations we see that people may love much or little, less or more. The word is also used in a similar way in our daily speech.

What is the actual condition being described when we say that a person has a strong favorable feeling toward another, or a weak favorable feeling toward another. In the first case, we simply mean that one person is very much interested in the other person and desires very much to do him good or will do anything reasonable to help him and sometimes even that which is unreasonable. On the other hand, one who holds a weak favorable attitude toward another would expend very little effort to aid his happiness or well-being. It is also true that when one person hates another he will not only refuse to do him good but will do him evil. If he has only a mild unfavorable attitude toward him he would not do him evil but if it were left to his own heart neither would he do him good. In this we see that one’s feeling and one’s actions, which truly represent him, tend to be in harmony with each other.



Let us pursue the study of our question, "What is love?" further by considering the developmental history of man's personal feelings. Why do we love what we love? Why do we hate what we hate? Why is it that some people love some things and other people love others? Why do some people love those individuals who are hated by other people? Are such feelings inherited or are they the result of human experience? When a child is born into this world, he has no inherent sense of that which is good or bad, of that which is right or wrong, or of that which is helpful or harmful. In fact, he is probably the most helpless and dependent creature of all of God's creation. He is endowed with certain rudimentary organic patterns of behavior (respiratory, circulatory, and digestive) and a capacity for learning and growth. Since the child is completely unacquainted with the things and people in his environment, his attitude toward them may be said to be indifferent or neutral. At first he is unable to distinguish his mother from any other person or even from the objects around him. However, as time passes the person who waits upon him, supplies his needs, provides his comforts gradually becomes identified as being different from the objects or persons within the child's world. Thus, the person who gives the child repeated and consistent satisfactions becomes the object of his favorable personal feelings and that without respect to color, sex or age. This is unmistakable evidence that such attitudes result from the treatment which the child receives. It is also true that the child will develop an unfavorable, or negative, attitude toward any person regardless of race or re-

lationship who repeatedly and consistently deals with the child in a way to provide dissatisfaction. It is even true at times that a person attempts to secure a favorable personal feeling from the child but there is something about his approach or appearance that chances to be displeasing or bring dissatisfaction. Thus an unfavorable attitude is the result. Hence, it is evident that we love the people or things which provide us with satisfaction and we hate those who repeatedly offer dissatisfaction.

It is apparent that the personal favorable feelings or attitudes of early child life are based upon physical satisfactions. The person, whether mother or nurse, who relieves the child's discomfort by a change of clothing or who affords him pleasure by feeding or petting is the one toward whom the child shows signs of fondness. However, as time passes the basis for satisfactions tends to shift from the physical to social. The child has learned to supply his own physical needs in large part and such has tended to become a routine matter. At the same time, he has come to feel a greater need for the company of others and to find greater enjoyment in the favor and commendation of others. The child seeks the approval first of older people, later of those of his own age, then particularly those of his own sex and during the period of adolescence those of the opposite sex. In the last case, his desires and satisfactions are heightened by his organic and glandular development and also by his broadened conception of life and the relationships that make it happy and successful. And so on through life it goes. Our love or positive personal feeling arises out of satisfactions

and our hate or negative personal feeling out of dissatisfactions.

You may object to the foregoing explanation since it appears to make love purely a matter of selfishness. If this were the end of the explanation, your objection would not be without foundation. To the present we have considered only one source of satisfactions. Our illustrations of satisfactions have all been drawn from experiences of receiving. This has been done because satisfactions from receiving gifts, favors, commendation, etc., are universal. In this principle of human development is found the explanation of the universal tendency of human selfishness. This class of satisfactions is infantile or adolescent in character but all positive personal feelings seem to have their beginning in them and consequently all love seems to develop from this beginning. The other source of satisfaction is giving, and under normal conditions it soon begins to operate jointly with receiving and to have its strengthening effect upon our personal feelings. In fact, when this does not result in some degree our personal feeling is no more than a fleshly indulgence whose duration depends upon the strength and duration of our human propensity. You may prefer to call that personal feeling derived from receiving, selfish enjoyment, and that derived from giving, love. However, due to the very nature of the case this distinction could only be theoretical and of no importance to us in this discussion.

It is probable that you have generally thought, as many other people have, that the giving of gifts is the way to make a person love you. This may be a good starting

point due to the fact that receiving is the most common source of human satisfaction but unless your gifts provide actual satisfaction that result in reciprocation they do not produce the desired effect. Did you ever observe the case of a young man who was most desirous of winning the love of a young lady and being conscious of the fact that the desire was in no sense mutual he proceeded to win her by showering her with gifts, even expensive gifts? What happened? At first the gifts were reluctantly accepted; later they were rejected or even spurned. Why? Simply because under the circumstances they not only failed to produce a satisfaction but aroused a feeling of dissatisfaction or resentment. The giving of a gift may accomplish nothing, but the giving of a satisfaction will incline a person toward you. However, if one is to have a strong and abiding love for you, he must find a real satisfaction in giving to you.

How would you answer the question, "Why does your mother love you?" Or, if you have her no longer, "Why did your mother love you?" If you have never been asked that question before, you might respond with some such reply as, "Because she is my mother," or "she has always loved me." Both remarks, of course, are true but neither answers the question. If you would be inclined to read into these remarks the idea that the basis of your mother's love for you is hereditary then there are two other questions which demand answers. "Why do some mothers fail to love their children with that devotion that is most frequently present?" and, "Why do other women who are not mothers, who have the care of chil-

dren from babyhood frequently show that devotion that is unsurpassed by that of the mother who gave birth to her baby?" I would not say that there are not many influences arising from the relationship of mother with child, the experience of giving birth and the conditions that accompany those early associations do not predispose a mother to love her child, but that proverbial love of a mother which knows no limit and ends only with life has its origin in a very basic principle of human nature. Does your mother love you with a mother's unfailing devotion because she has received so much from you? Is it because you have provided her with so many of the material comforts of life? Is it because you have always been so kind, so obedient and so helpful? Is it because you have sacrificed so much of your own time, of your own life for her? You know better than that. You had a place in her heart to live and to die before you were ever able to do much for your mother. And even if you have done very little since reaching the age that you could, or even if you have brought sorrow, grief and disappointment, she loves you still. Why? Because she has given her life to you. Not that which she gave to you at the time of your birth but since that time. Those weary days, those sleepless nights, those moments of fear, those hours of anxiety were so interspersed with hopes and dreams that the depth of the weariness was far surpassed by the joy of satisfaction. It is true that we give because we love and it is equally true that our deepest love is because of the joy of giving.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON 5

1. What knowledge is imperative for a complete answer to the question, "How to inherit eternal life"?
2. What do we mean by knowing what love is?
3. What has caused confusion and increased the demand for a careful study of the word "love"?
4. What statement has been made from the pulpit that has further confused people's understanding?
5. What fact suggests that the statement that nobody knows what love is is incorrect?
6. What is our most common method of defining a word?
7. What other common words name the same general class of characteristics as the word, "love"?
8. What do these words have in common?
9. From this it is clear that the word "love" is describing what sort of thing?
10. What are the two classes of such feelings?
11. Indicate the range and the two major classes of personal feelings.
12. Why can we restrict our discussion to the words "love" and "hate"?
13. Give Bible evidence that love varies in degree?
14. Describe what is meant by one having a strong personal feeling or a weak personal feeling?
15. From the developmental history of man's personal feelings indicate why we love what we love, and hate what we hate?
16. Show how satisfactions change as a child grows older.
17. What type of experience is the basis of the satisfactions discussed up to this point?
18. What is the other type of experience that provides satisfaction?
19. Only under what condition will giving gifts cause one to love you? Illustrate.
20. Instead of merely giving a gift what should we seek to give?
21. Why does, or did, your mother love you?

## LESSON 6

### WHAT IS LOVE? (Continued)

In our analytical study of love thus far we have seen that love is a favorable personal feeling or attitude which is the result of satisfaction obtained from receiving and giving. You may hesitate to accept this explanation at first because you think it too simple. If so, please recall the fact that every basic law of nature is simple, including the laws of human nature and this is the most fundamental law governing human nature or human behavior. The complexity of the situation results from the wide range of circumstances and conditions under which it operates and consequently to the casual observer has not always appeared as varying manifestations of the same thing.

May we review some of the variations of the circumstances under which the word "love" has been used that have contributed to this confusion of meaning. In the first place, the word "love" has been employed to express a favorable personal feeling toward a wide range of persons, things and activities. We love people of both sexes, of all ages, sizes and virtually all relationships—parents, children, brothers, sisters, cousins, in-laws, friends, chums, etc. People have used the word "love" to express their attitudes toward virtually all kinds of objects both animate and inanimate. Among our pets are

to be found many sizes and breeds of cats, dogs, birds, fish, with many other animals representing the biological range from snakes to horses. We often hear love expressed for a variety of foods, drinks and articles of clothing, for houses, trees, streams, valleys and flowers. The word "love" is also used to express the enjoyment of activities, some of which are even immoral. Some love to get up early in the morning; others love to sleep late. Some love to play; others love to work. Among the activities that are loved by somebody are reading, writing, singing, swimming, boating, playing various games, riding, flying, hunting and literally dozens of others.

With this extended range of things toward which various people express their favorable personal feeling by the word "love," it should not be surprising that the strength of the feeling being expressed varies very widely. In some cases the feeling is undoubtedly very intense, in others only mediocre, and in others relatively weak. When we add to this varying strength of personal feeling the varying selectivity of people in their use of words, it confuses still further the concept represented in the word "love."

Another variation in the use of the word "love" that has played its part in confusing its meaning is in speaking of personal feelings with varying degrees of permanence. The term has been applied to personal feelings that are very short lived, one type of which is sometimes called "puppy love." On the other hand, it is used to designate that sacred enduring personal feeling best exemplified in our earthly relationship by mother's love. This practice



has also tended to becloud the meaning of the word "love." This usage, however, is proper and this variation in permanency has already been explained in terms of the satisfaction derived. The more permanent the basis for satisfaction, the more prolonged will be the favorable personal feeling that we call "love." It is altogether probable that the failures of many marriages are to be accounted for by the fact that they were consummated on the basis of physical satisfactions which are more or less transitory in nature. They sustained for a while that personal feeling that we call "love" but failed to endure or failed to be replaced by a more enduring type of satisfaction and consequently love disappeared. We should never forget that the permanence of one's love is dependent upon the enduring character of the satisfaction obtained.

Not only do people love a variety of things with a love that varies widely in its strength and also in its degree of permanence, but they express their love in a variety of ways. The ways in which love for objects is expressed is determined by the thing loved or the character of the satisfaction upon which the love is based. The ways in which love for a person are manifested are determined in part by age, sex and relationship involved. At various ages it is expressed differently between people of the same sex. Neither is it shown in the same way as between people of opposite sex. Love may be shown a father by a small son or daughter, of any age, by caressing; but not so by a grown son ordinarily. A man may kiss his wife, mother, sister or a very close friend under some circum-

stances but this would not be the customary expression of love for all others. It must also be remembered that kissing or caressing is only one of many modes of expressing one's favorable personal feelings and should it stand alone it would more likely be interpreted as an act of personal indulgence. If a man's only way of showing love for his wife were by the kiss, how long would the kiss be a symbol of love? If we would understand what love is, we must not allow a very limited number of conventional expressions of affection to cause us to overlook or underestimate the more universal forms of expression of one's genuine personal feelings toward his fellows. Do not forget that the kiss, the gift, the kind word, the helping hand are not love but mere expressions of the individual's attitude which in turn is a product of satisfactions that have been experienced.

There is one other complicating situation that should be called to mind and that is the one that arouses conflicting feelings. This probably happens with things and activities but we shall only concern ourselves where individuals are involved. Conflicting feelings result from the fact that the person provides you with both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. You may meet a person whose appearance is beautiful, and beauty is a common source of satisfaction. However, upon becoming acquainted with the individual, you find him or her to be very strongly self-centered and this commonly provides a dissatisfaction. In fact, in such cases the dissatisfaction will outweigh the satisfaction and your attitude toward such a one is not likely to be that of love. You may meet another

person whose appearance may be homely. In fact, there may be a repelling element in it, but you soon find the pleasing behavior of such a person may cause you to completely forget the actual physical appearance and your satisfaction may so much outweigh the dissatisfaction that your personal feeling toward him becomes very strongly favorable. A mother's child may be deformed even to being painful to look upon but the mother loves him still, especially after she has found satisfaction in doing what she can for his comfort and happiness. Or, a mother's child may be wayward but in spite of this source of dissatisfaction she loves him still because her love has become firmly established by her sacrifices through the years. She may be very much dissatisfied or hurt at his misbehavior but it only causes his need to appear the greater and her love to reach the farther.

In our study of love thus far, the purpose has been to dispel some of the mystery with which the topic has been enshrouded by careless remarks and cryptic allusions by showing its normal working place in the very heart of human activity. It is a basic influence in human nature that may well be described as a personal feeling resulting from individual satisfaction. It is one among several kinds of personal feelings and is no more complex than any other. Since it is one about which we have probably been more concerned and which has operated under so many varying conditions, it has been made to appear more complex. If we can understand the meaning of hate, we can understand the meaning of love. And if we can understand the other personal feelings, we can understand the meaning of hate and also of love.

There is another teaching that has been voiced by some from the pulpit that has tended to obscure the true Bible teaching on love and since love is the very heart of the Bible teaching, it has obscured the Bible teaching generally. The teaching to which I refer is that love, as the term is used in the scriptures, carries a different meaning from love as we know it in our human relationships. While love between relatives or friends is characterized by a warmth of personal feeling or affection, the love that God teaches his children to have for him and for each other is a sort of feelingless rationalization that should cause them to do good to some and not do evil to any. This has probably resulted from the inclination of some people to make the Christian religion a sort of artificial thing enshrouded in mystery, coming into man's life in an extraordinary way. They make it some sort of externally imposed control that some way becomes superimposed upon human nature, instead of seeing it as the work of an all wise Creator peculiarly adjusted to man's nature so as to become effective in molding him into a new creature if his faith is sufficient to establish with him the Christian values as real. God has spoken with man and dealt with man in terms of man's own language and experiences. Otherwise, man would be wholly incapable of arriving at the meaning of the things that are taught. Love as the term is used in the New Testament refers to the same basic attitude of human nature as that with which we are acquainted and to which we refer by the same word in our human relationships.

As first evidence that this is the case, let us observe that

Bible love originates in the same manner and is perpetuated in the same way as love as it is commonly known. It is the product of satisfaction. John declares, "We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). And Paul states, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14). The love of God and the love of Christ have been made manifest through their gifts—gifts of all kinds, some of which have gone to all men regardless of the character of their lives. Those who have recognized them as being divinely given have been turned toward Jehovah and those who have really believed in him have received spiritual gifts and have found joy in the promises of God and thus been constrained to love him more. This may be spoken of as the result of satisfaction by receiving, but this is not the end of the matter. The very nature of God's teaching and the greatness of his blessings have led those whose love had its beginning in receiving to find joy in giving and thus strengthen and perpetuate their love for God according to the same principle that one strengthens and perpetuates his love for man. Thus, it is evident that love as it is spoken of in the Bible originates and grows according to the same principle as love in human nature.

Those who think of the love of Christianity as being different from the love as experienced apart from religion seem to represent it as an operative principle which brings about good to one's fellows under the influence of the command of divine teaching. Its distinguishing characteristic appears to be the lack of personal feeling-tone or want of expression similar to that which is sometimes designated as affection. Can this be true? If so,

Christianity is a kind of legalism that can be satisfactorily complied with by anyone who is seriously moved by the impetus of Bible commandment. This neither signifies that one has partaken of the nature of a new creature in Christ Jesus, nor does it lend itself to that personal development of one's spiritual nature. Nor is it in agreement with I Corinthians 13:1-3.

Let us now turn to the New Testament teaching to discover the characteristic of love as the term is used there, and make some comparison with the best example of love as we know it in our human relationships—mother's love. In the thirteenth chapter of the I Corinthian letter, we have Bible love described in terms of its activity. This makes our comparison easy because our understanding of mother's love has been obtained through our acquaintance with its manifestation in her daily life. After making it clear in the first three verses of this chapter that religion without love would be of no profit at all, in verse four Paul begins to tell us about that love which is necessary. Read the following verses slowly and make comparison with a mother's love as you read. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13: 4-7). In many of the details a mother's love is described exactly and even where phrases may not be exactly applicable they help to delineate the picture of self-forget-

fulness, and helpfulness to others that finds its greatest realism in a mother's love. "Love suffereth long and is kind." Can we find words that more accurately describe a mother's love? Is this not the peculiar characteristic of a mother's love? Can we conceive of this love that Paul tells us all must have as being void of affection? "Love envieth not." Did a true mother ever envy her child because the child had good things to enjoy? "Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Did a mother's love ever try to steal glory from the child by parading her own greatness? "Seeketh not its own." How true of a mother's love that is so fully self sacrificing. "Is not provoked, taketh not account of evil." How like a mother's patience and unwillingness to recognize her child's wrong doing! Where is the mother who did not praise the good in her child and excuse the evil? She may even call the child next door "a brat" but her own "cute" in the same mischief. Is it possible for Christian love to be so much like mother's love and be without feeling? Can love be long-suffering and kind without feeling? Can love dispel the feeling of envy from the human heart and banish the ruling influence of pride and personal greatness and still be void of any feeling of its own? Can love cause one to forget his own personal interests, neutralize his resentful impulses and blind him to the evil in others, and not have the vitalizing power of personal feeling? Can love sustain one in bearing the inquiries and insults of immature or ill-guided brethren in maintaining faith in them and hope that all will be well and in enduring reproaches and persecutions without the emotional support of personal feeling?

In the Roman letter Paul makes it clear that a real love of the brethren is not without warmth of feeling. After exhorting that their love be without hypocrisy, Paul admonishes, "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10), and after exhorting them to practice other activities which could only be followed by those who possessed a feeling of personal interest, he gives them this instruction, "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). On very little examination, it is evident that such instruction could only be followed with propriety and decency when it was motivated by a real element of personal feeling. How could one truly rejoice with a brother who had experienced some outstanding good fortune that filled his heart with joy and happiness and yet have no personal feeling of joy in the matter? How could we show our love and compassion for those who weep and feel no sorrow because his heart is burdened with grief? And what a sham the whole matter would be if one sat down with them that weep and proceeded to wail and contrive to shed tears but experienced no warmth of personal feeling. It would be a mere hypocritical enactment, the living of a falsehood, an abomination both in the sight of men and in the sight of God. Thus it is evident, remove the element of personal feeling from love and it is no longer worthy of the name and the resulting activity is no longer characteristically Christian. Paul teaches this same lesson to the Corinthian people in a slightly different form. "And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer



with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:26). Paul in an exhortation to the Ephesians, and Peter in exhorting the brethren of Asia Minor give instruction that could never be followed by those whose love lacked personal feeling. Without it they could not be tenderhearted nor compassionate. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32). "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Pet. 3:8-9).

On one occasion I heard a speaker attempt to defend the teaching that the Bible idea of love is different from that generally used among men by this illustration. After pointing out the Bible teaching that one should love his own wife as he loves himself (Eph. 5:33), he raised the question, "Wouldn't I be a pretty sight standing before the mirror tickling myself under the chin and telling myself how much I loved myself?" In this, he was merely comparing his loving himself and loving his wife in terms of one of the ways he expressed his love for his wife and in doing so he selected a way in which he would not express his love for himself. Besides, this was not the only way he manifested his love for his wife; had it been, his home would have soon disintegrated and he would have had no wife to love. In reality in many ways he had

shown his love for his wife just as he had shown his love for himself. He had been careful to supply her needs as well as his. He had also found considerable satisfaction in acquiring those things that would provide comfort and bring happiness to himself as well as to her. And to anyone who knew the man, it was evident that he loved his wife as he loved himself and that he probably loved himself as he loved his wife even though he never stood before the mirror and tickled himself under the chin and declared such love.

Some people have found encouragement in the idea that the love of Christians (some would say love required of Christians) is different from love in our natural human relationships by the discovery of the fact that in the Greek there are two words in frequent use each translated by the word "love." It is true that their derivational meanings are different but this does not mean that one of them is employed to refer to one kind of love and the other to another kind. In fact, an examination of the Greek text shows this not to be true. The two words are, "*agapao*" and "*phileo*." The first word is thought by some to refer to the principle of Christian love in particular and the second to that of human relationships. They have observed that Jesus in asking Peter if he "loved him more than these," used the word "*agapao*" in the first two forms of the question (John 21:15-17) to which Peter replied with the word "*phileo*." Whereupon Jesus used the word "*phileo*" in his third question and Peter replied in the same term to suggest definite change in meaning. Some seem to think that Jesus was referring to, or asking about

a higher, more sacred, form of love but since Peter did not respond in kind, Jesus changed his question to speak in Peter's terms. This may be true. However, an examination of the use of these two words in the Greek text does not seem to offer much support to such a lesson based on derivational niceties of language.

The use of words in the language of the New Testament seems to have been about the same as the use of words today. They are used with meanings that vary slightly, and sometimes more than slightly, in the language of different people and upon different occasions. Basing a lesson upon the use of a word in some particular situation without a careful study of the use of that word in the text generally is a very hazardous practice as will be seen in this case.

May we first observe that there are many cases in which the two words seem to be used interchangeably as they are used to express love for the same objects. The first scripture reference given in each pair of the following will be the one that employs the word "*agapao*" and the second "*phileo*." Both words are used in reference to Jesus' love for Lazarus (John 11:5 and John 11:3). Both words are used to refer to the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23 and John 20:2). Both are used in expressing love for life (I Pet. 3:10 and John 12:25). Both are used to describe the Pharisees' attitude toward the chief seat (Luke 11:43 and Matt. 23:6), and also in other expressions where people seek the glory of men (John 12:43 and Luke 20:46). Both words are used to describe the attitude toward the divine, "And he answering said, Thou

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22).

The last quotation in the above paragraph shows that the word "*phileo*" was evidently used at times to designate the highest type of love. This is also borne out in the following quotations. The word "*phileo*" is used to express God's love for men. "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father" (John 16:27). In the last quotation, it is also used to refer to the apostles' love for Jesus and in the following quotation to speak of God's love for his Son. "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel" (John 5:20). It is also used in speaking of Christian love in the apostolic days. "All that are with me salute thee. Salute them that love us in faith" (Titus 3:15).

Furthermore, "*agapao*" which is the more frequently used word, is employed in a wide variety of cases as shown in the following references in speaking of loving life (I Pet. 3:10), loving the world (I John 2:15), loving greeting (Luke 11:43), loving to go in long clothing (Mark 12:38), loving the uppermost room (Matt. 23:6), loving masters (Luke 16:13), loving to pray in the synagogue (Matt. 6:5), loving them that love you (Luke 6:

32), husbands' love for wives (Eph. 5:25), young women's love for husbands (Titus 2:4), loving neighbor and loving God (Luke 10:27), apostles' love for one another (John 15:17), loving enemies (Luke 6:35). From these cases it is evident from the use of the word "*agapao*" that its meaning cannot be specialized on a derivational basis since it is so widely and generally used.

It is also interesting to note that when Jesus spoke of the love that was necessary for one to be worthy of him, he stated it in comparison with one's love for his family. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). He nowhere indicated that he was speaking of something different.

May we now briefly summarize our discussion. Love is a favorable, personal feeling or attitude that varies from weak to strong or little to much, expresses itself in many different ways and may be transitory or permanent in character. The personal feeling is the result of experiences that provide consistent or predominating satisfactions and its degree of permanence will depend upon the enduring nature of the satisfaction. The most elemental, and therefore the most universal, basis of satisfaction is to be found in receiving because of its close relationship to man's physical nature, but the most enduring satisfactions are those derived from giving. It should be remembered that when all satisfactions are gone, love is gone. From this it is clear that love is a personal feeling which, like all other personal feelings,

is produced through the operation of a basic principle which God embedded in man's nature at the beginning.

The word "love" as it is used in the Bible designates the same favorable personal feeling as when used elsewhere. We have seen from Paul's description of the love that Christians must have that it differs in no particular from a mother's love. Christians are also taught "to be tenderly affectioned one to another," and to "rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep," "be compassionate," etc., which certainly demands that their love be characterized by personal feeling. It is clear that no grounds for distinguishing between the use of the word "love" in the Bible from the general use of the word is provided by the Bible use of the two Greek words that are commonly translated "love." And, finally, the love that makes one worthy of his Lord is tested by being compared with the love of our closest family relationships.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 6

1. Why may this explanation appear to be too simple?
2. Outline the varying circumstances and conditions under which the word "love" is applied.
3. What teaching from the pulpit has obscured the Bible teaching on love?
4. From what has it probably resulted?
5. What is offered as the first evidence that "love" as the term is used in the New Testament refers to the same thing as when used otherwise?
6. What is the distinction made by some people between New Testament love and love generally?
7. Give the Bible description of love that agrees with love as we know it among men.

8. Give New Testament evidence that Christian love is characterized by personal feeling or affection.
9. Cite instruction from Paul and Peter that could never be followed by those whose love lacks personal feeling.
10. What is wrong with the speaker's illustration relative to loving his wife as he loved himself?
11. Show that the use of two Greek words that are translated "love" do not necessarily indicate that there are two kinds of love.
12. Summarize the teaching on love.

## LESSON 7

### DO YOU LOVE GOD?

There is no more important question than this one if it is true that God's word teaches that you must love God in order to inherit eternal life. Then it is evident that your answer to this question shows without doubt the soundness of your hope for a share in the eternal inheritance. Furthermore, if you believe this teaching and if you are in earnest about the matter, you will welcome the opportunity to turn the searchlight of God's truth into your own heart, earnestly and prayerfully weighing the matter to make sure that your answer is correct. By correct answer we do not mean that your answer merely represents your attitude toward God correctly, but that your answer is what it ought to be; that your answer to the question "Do you love God?" is "Yes" unequivocally, by both word and manner of life and is in full agreement with what God knows about you.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to answer this question for you but rather to call to your attention characteristic marks and objective measures by which you may test your own self, if you are interested, and may know the answer. What is said will not be said either to justify or to condemn but to help each one to understand himself and to know whether or not he loves God as a true child of God will love him. This is a personal matter



and unless you will accept it as such, the discussion is pointless.

We have learned in the preceding lesson that love is love. It may vary widely in the objects or being toward which it is directed, in its strength or intensity, in the length of time through which it continues and in its mode or manner of being expressed, but basically it is all of the same character. It originates in man's own nature through the effective operation of a principle with which man was divinely endowed from the beginning. All men love. The objects of their love may vary widely. Its fervor may vary greatly from person to person, from object to object or from situation to situation. It may appear as a mere passing fancy or as a lifetime devotion. It may be expressed by a smile, a pat on the shoulder, a kiss on the cheek; hours of suffering, weeks of sacrifice or years of loyal service. Under whatever circumstance and in whatever relationship it may be found, if it is in any sense worthy to be called by the name love, it is the result of experiences that have brought satisfaction. This is just as true of Christian love as it is of that which is common to our general human relationships.

Love has been shown to be a favorable personal feeling. Therefore, Christian love, or love that comports with Bible teaching, is not the mere performance of a favorable act. Feeding the hungry or helping the sick may be a favorable act to the one who receives it, but whether or not it is an expression of love is dependent upon the experience of the one who does it. The thing that I am trying to say is that love is not accomplished or achieved

by legalistically complying with the teaching that we should do evil to no man and at least do good to some. Bible love is a feeling, a personal feeling, a favorable personal feeling and not merely a good act. Where there is such a feeling, there will be a good act if there is any act at all and there will be an act if one truly loves. When love becomes the operative principle of one's life, his religion becomes true Christianity and all sham, hollowness and formalism have been replaced by a personal realism that is transforming the individual into a new creature like unto the Son of the living God.

May we not forget that giving is not necessarily loving, but loving will always include or be accompanied by giving. This has always been the case. God loved and he gave. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Christ loved and he gave. "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell" (Eph. 5:1-2). "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us" (I John 3:16). It is also true that if man loves he will give. If one person claims to love another and has opportunity, as well as the ability, to give to the other that which he needs but does not, his claim would be considered false by everyone.

May we illustrate the matter further by that which we recognize as being the highest form of love to be

found among us—a mother's love. What would you think of a mother who claimed to love her child dearly but never gave him anything. To such a situation you would unhesitatingly say, "Impossible." To make the picture a little more graphic, think of the child at the age of four, cold and hungry and begging for food. The mother has the food and there is no reason why the child should not have it, but the little plea goes unheeded. Several years later the child is in need of money to buy clothing. The weather is cold and so is he. His mother has the money. She has no particular need for the money. She is well supplied with warm clothing for herself, but will not supply the child's needs yet speaks to her neighbor of how much she loves the child. This we could never believe. Why? For the very reason that mother's love has won the place it holds in the admiration of all because it gives. Also, it may be added that God's love would be completely incomprehensible if it did not give. In fact, in so far as its influence with man is concerned, it would be nonexistent.

When we think of a mother's giving to her child, we seem to think first of those things which supply the child's real needs, physical needs and many times we think of the failure to supply them not as a mere indication of the lack of love but as an act of cruelty.

Certainly the mother's love will give money or the material things which money can supply to provide for her child's needs, but this is not all that her love gives to her child. Another very urgent need is instruction. The child is born into a world with which he is wholly unac-

quainted. He does not know what is good or what is bad, what will promote life or what will destroy life. The child must be taught the danger of fire, of cutting tools, of moving cars, of poisonous substances, and must be carefully protected and guarded until the lessons have been learned. A mother not only patiently and kindly provides this instruction but with the best of instruction there are failures on the child's part. There are mistakes. Consequently, the mother must also give correction and this is often even more difficult to give. There are also times when the child meets with failure, when his task is not easily accomplished, when he is faced with dissatisfaction and disappointment. Then the mother must give encouragement. Without it, he may give up. With it, he may succeed. There are also times when he is broken hearted and in need of consolation. He may have broken his best toy. An automobile may have crushed the life out of his faithful dog. There may be nothing to take its place. His great need is consolation and this his mother gives. These are a few of the things that the mother must give to her child if she loves him.

As the mother's love gives what the child needs, so the Christian's love gives what his fellow man needs and especially what his fellow Christian needs. There are times of misfortune when probably the most pressing need is money or those material things that can be supplied with money and when the need is money, love gives money as John makes the matter too plain to be misunderstood. "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his com-

passion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

Unfortunately, when giving is mentioned as a part of Christianity, the average person immediately thinks of money and often seems to think of nothing else. It is true that in this material world among physical beings money is one of the great needs, or that which can be supplied with money. But if money is all that one gives, he is giving but little, and although it is very important at times and very necessary it is probably the least personal in character. As he is able, a Christian should be ready and glad to give money, and as Paul urged the Ephesian people to work that they might "have whereof to give to him that need" (Eph. 4:28), Christians should also prepare to give the other things that are needed. Since people are all born into the kingdom of God, and hence begin as babes, as babes their needs are somewhat similar to those of the child that is born into this world. Many times, due to circumstances, a Christian has little or no money to give, but everyone who loves the word of God and who loves his neighbor can study and prepare himself to give instruction to many who need it.

Let us all remember that we can only give that which we have. As Peter said to the beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee" (Acts 3:6). He gave to the man that which was much greater than money and even though we cannot give what Peter gave, we can prepare ourselves to give that which is much greater than money. But we will never be able to give instruction unless we

have acquired instruction. There are many people who can give money because they have prepared to give money, but many of them have remained paupers so far as being able to give instruction is concerned. And why? Simply because they have not sought instruction. In fact, too many people who call themselves Christians have not learned to direct their own steps nor to instruct others in that which is good.

As is true with the children of this world, so it is with God's children. Even after they have received reasonable instruction they forget, they neglect, they make their mistakes of various sorts and their greatest need may become the need of correction. But until we are able to give instruction, how can we give correction; and until we have applied instruction in our own lives, how can we hope to make correction in the lives of others? Again may we say, we cannot give that which we do not have nor that which we have not taken. So Paul admonishes, "Ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1). James shows us the importance of correction when he admonishes, "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20). Great is the need for correction. May we strive to become spiritual that we may be able to give that which is so greatly needed.

Another thing that is frequently needed among Christians is encouragement and where there is a need, there

is an opportunity to give. But frequently only love sees the need and only love is ready and looking for the opportunity to give. Paul exhorts, "Encourage the faint-hearted" (I Thess. 5:14). There are times in the lives of most people that they are made to realize their spiritual frailties. It seems that things just do not go right. They find themselves thinking the wrong thing, saying the wrong thing and doing the wrong thing until they become discouraged and very childish in their behavior. They are inclined to surrender and say, "What's the use?" but also like a child, a little encouragement, a little reminder of God's loving kindness, a little assurance of God's forgiveness and sunshine begins to break into the beclouded life and hope breaks forth into a new effort. May God give us the love that will open to us this great door of opportunity.

There is one other great need which does not come so often but many times, when it does come, the opportunity goes unheeded and that is the need for consolation or sympathy. As we live among the temporal things of life with our natural human relationships, there are times when we are called upon to give up that which is near and dear to us and for the moment there seems to be no way to replace it. There is no possibility to restore. We must accept the ultimate. We must give up. Sooner or later this is the experience of us all. A genuine love is the true qualification that makes it possible to give that consolation which is so badly needed. As Christians, we should learn to weep with those who weep as well as rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15). We should

never forget that times of emergency or misfortune are always occasions of Christian opportunity as well as tests of Christian love. If the suffering, grief, or misfortune of a fellow being, regardless of race, color, or creed, does not arouse a feeling of compassion in a Christian, he does not yet love as he ought to love. And if he does not use an opportunity to show his spirit of sympathy or helpfulness, how will his fellows ever know that he has it? How will his love ever be truly known? How will the Spirit of Christ in him ever be recognized? How can the light of the gospel ever shine through him into the lives of others? The time of need—misfortune, suffering, grief—is the open door for Christian influence and the real Christian takes occasion to enter. Whether the unfortunate person is good or bad, rich or poor, white or black, friend or enemy, a member of “our” church or not, may we always seek a way to show our love or the love of Christ that abides in us.

Love not only gives what is needed, but what is wanted in so far as the giver is able. This is seen even among friends and relatives when some particular gift date such as Christmas, or birthday anniversary, or wedding anniversary comes we seek to know what the person would want. Of course, if a gift is merely fulfilling a social custom as a matter of exchange anything of respectful value would be satisfactory but if it is for someone that we really love, we want it to be fully appreciated and we try to make sure that it is what the person really wants for we recognize the fact that the greater the satisfaction afforded by the gift the more effectively it represents our



love. The same is true with our love for God. If we really love him, we want to give what he wants and we will seek to know what he wants.

Love not only gives but the gift is the most definite measure of one's love. The more one gives, the more he loves. If the gift is in the form of personal service, its true evaluation as a measure of your love is not gauged merely by the time and energy invested but rather by what you gave up in order to do it; not what its worth was to the receiver, but what the cost was to you. If the gift is material in character, the real meaning is determined by a comparison with one's ability to give. A gift of five dollars from a person of wealth would express very little personal feeling toward you because it has very little personal value to him. He invested very little in doing it. He will be giving up nothing of moment when he bestows it upon you. While the same gift from one who has little or from one whose income is small, from one to whom it has a great deal of personal value, it becomes a real expression of love because it represents a true personal feeling for you. Now to put the matter differently, a gift of considerable value under some circumstances shows less love than one of very small value under different circumstances. Jesus gave us this basis of evaluation in his conversation with his disciples as he stood in the temple and saw the people casting their gifts into the treasury. "And he looked up, and saw the rich men that were casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, This poor widow cast

in more than they all: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1-4).

In an effort to make this vital lesson more vivid, I am going to use a personal illustration. With all of my declarations of love to my wife, of how much I love her, suppose when Christmas time comes around again, the time when such is generally remembered with some kind of gift, I should go to the store, select a sleazy little twenty-five cent handkerchief, prepare a card on which I write, "With all my love, your devoted husband," ask that the package be gift wrapped and the card be enclosed. If I should do a thing like that, wouldn't you like to be present when Mrs. Strop opens the package just to see what happens? Or what would you do if you should receive such a present under such circumstances? Or why would you expect something unusual to happen? Is it not because that which should represent love as it claims fails so completely that it is making a jest of the whole matter? And who is the person who would not consider the matter a sham and a shame. But why, may we ask, would it be considered such? Is it not because I would be using something of no personal value to me to represent my personal feelings toward her? Is it not because it is so much less than it ought to be to portray a genuine personal interest?

You would not treat your wife this way, neither would I, but how do we treat God? Does what you give to God truly represent your love for him? The answer to this question is, "Yes." Your giving is the measure of your lov-

ing. When you have totaled your financial gifts to the cause of Christianity and the good of humanity as a result of your Christian relationship in comparison with that which you are able to do; and your time, energy and effort invested in studying the Bible, worshiping God at church and at home, consciously trying to portray the Christ-like character, and lovingly seeking to teach others the truth, you have a definite measure of your love for God. Look it over carefully and decide for yourself, do you love him? And remember that the crown of life is prepared for those who love him.

Let us return to our illustration for one point more. Let's just suppose that my good wife in her kindness accepted the present and made no special scene over the matter, but the next day a neighbor from across the way drops in, a truthful neighbor, a goodhearted neighbor. She tells Mrs. Strop about a beautiful ten dollar Christmas present that I had given to another woman. Wouldn't you be curious to know what would happen when I got home that night? What do you think I would deserve under such circumstances? Or if such were to happen to you under similar circumstances, what would be your feeling about the matter? And why would this second situation be more difficult to bear than the first? Is it not because the greater gift to someone else shows love for another which was formerly pledged to you and rightfully belonged to you? Did you ever stop to compare your gifts—your money, your time, your energies—to God with what you squander upon your own pleasures? How does God's share compare with the gift to "lady pleasure?" And how

can we give God so little of our personal attention? How can we be so unconcerned or so little concerned with the cause for which Christ died and so lustily sing our hymn, "Oh, How I Love Jesus?" Remember your giving is the only objective measure of your loving and look the matter squarely in the face. Do you love God?

Let us not forget that God loved and he gave. Christ loved and he gave. If you love, you give. You give to whom you love and relatively speaking, you give as much as you love.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 7

1. Why is your answer to the question, "Do you love God?" so important?
2. What is the meaning of the expression "love is love"?
3. What is "Bible love" and what is it not?
4. What has love always done?
5. How has mother's love won its place of admiration?
6. Name some gifts of a mother to her child.
7. What should a Christian's love lead him to give?
8. Show from John's epistle that the Christian who has material things must give them in case of need.
9. What only can one give?
10. How only can one be able to give instruction?
11. How only can one be able to give correction?
12. Mention two points of resemblance between Christians and children with reference to encouragement.
13. To a Christian times of an emergency or misfortune are occasions of what as well as tests of what?
14. What does love give besides what is needed?
15. What is the most definite measure of one's love?
16. How must we arrive at the true value of a gift, either momentary or otherwise?
17. Why would it be a sham and a shame for me to give a twenty-five cent handkerchief to one whom I claim to love most dearly?
18. What is the full measure of your love for God?
19. What further comparison should be made to finally establish a true evaluation of your gifts to God?

## LESSON 8

### DO YOU LOVE GOD? (Continued)

By reasoning from a few statements, observations, and human experiences, it appears that where there is loving there is giving and that the absence of giving is evidence of the absence of real love. Now let us turn to the Bible for direct statements that show the meaning and effectiveness of love as an influence in Christian activities and provide an objective measure by which we may test the genuineness of our love.

How is this same test of love expressed in statements from the Bible? John declares, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). "And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that we should walk in it" (II John 6). These statements are plain enough. The diligence with which I keep God's commandments is the measure of my love for God.

The same test is shown in Jesus' statements in regard to people's love for him. Jesus said, "If you love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Here Jesus applies

the same test. Those who keep his commandments love him and are his friends, are loved of his Father and in this way abide in his love. On another occasion Jesus showed the glaring inconsistency of those who called him Lord but failed to love and honor him as Lord, he asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). This short question very dramatically shows the painful shallowness of one's religion who calls Jesus Lord but fails to give him that place of love, honor and respect as the ruler of his heart and life. Since he was the Son of God, came to do the will of God, and his commandments were the commandments of God, since he was called "Immanuel" which means "God with us," we will surely love him if we love God, and can certainly take that which is indicated as a measure of our love for him as a measure of our love for God. Without a doubt our love for God is measured by the faithfulness with which we keep his commandments.

In view of the wide variety of practices among religious people, there is sure to arise in the minds of some the question, "Which commandments?" By many people who are honest and sincere this question is being variously answered and we only have to listen a bit or observe the religious practices of people to become acquainted with their respective answers. It might be helpful to examine a few of these in arriving at our answer to the question. For the most part, these answers seem to have resulted from arbitrary or incidental classifications of God's commandments as important and unimportant, or essential and nonessential.

For some reason there are many people who seem to hold the idea, functionally at least, that it is more important to comply with God's negative commandments than his positive commandments; that one should be very careful not to practice the things which he teaches man not to do but they are willing to be a little more careless with those commandments that direct man in what he should do. How this has happened is difficult to understand. It could be that some influence is carried over from the fact that the commandment that was violated by Mother Eve was a negative commandment. She did what she was told not to do. Or it may be the effects of the predominance of the negative form of commandment in the Decalogue. However, it is more likely to have been influenced by the fact that violation of negative commandments—doing what people are taught to do—generally produce more immediate and more evident ill effects upon the one who is violating the commandment or upon some of his fellows than would be caused by failing to do what God has taught us to do. The negative commandments are largely moral in character. On the same grounds similar distinctions are frequently made within the field of negative commandments. It is generally agreed that God has commanded people not to commit adultery and also has commanded them not to lie. However, most people would consider the violation of the first commandment greater than that of the second. Adultery is considered a greater sin than lying. Why? Is it not because we measure it by the effect of the sin upon others and not by what it indicates with respect to our attitude toward God. To

be sure, under ordinary circumstances the effects of adultery are much more disturbing to society especially to the particular families involved, than the effects of lying are ordinarily. But does this mean that man is more guilty in the sight of God? In either case he would be disrespecting and dishonoring God; he would be showing a lack of love for God; he would be replacing God's way by his own way. How could the distinction be made? May we illustrate the point from Jesus' teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus stated, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28). Here we see a man declared to be guilty of adultery when no actual act has been committed; when he has not touched a woman; when probably the woman involved never knew that he had such a lust. It is evident from this that the magnitude of sin in the sight of God cannot be measured by the damage to others or the sorrow that results from it.

This is also illustrated by Eve's sin. What did she do that was so terrible? She did not lie to her neighbor. There is no reason to believe that taking the fruit was an act of stealing. She did not commit adultery, or murder, or blasphemy. She did not openly renounce God. She merely took a piece of fruit and ate it. Why was that so terribly sinful? Because she failed to keep God's commandment. She failed to honor and respect God. She failed in her love toward God. She failed by substituting the human way for God's way. Such failure is sin. Since



it is unsafe to judge the gravity of violating God's commandments on the basis of the effect of the disobedience upon one's fellows, this is surely an unsound basis for judging some negative commandments to be more important than others or that negative commandments are more important than positive commandments. Why should people think it would be more displeasing to God to do what he tells us not to do than to fail to do, as best we can, what he tells us to do? Why should one of these failures indicate less love for God than the other? If we love God, we will keep his commandments; we will deal with God in a way that manifests our love for him; we will honestly seek to do the things he teaches us to do as carefully as we avoid the practices that he commands us not to follow.

There is another classification of God's teachings that has given rise to distinctions and to variously misplaced emphasis. These two classes might be spoken of in different ways—teachings that govern man in his relationship to God, and those that govern him in his relationship to his fellow man; or some might say religious teachings and moral teachings, or teachings that are concerned in particular with church and worship and those that refer to upright living. Judging from the lives of people the evaluation of these two classes of teachings varies very widely. There are some who consider God's teaching relative to worship and church affairs exceedingly important. They are very careful to observe them, or some of them very scrupulously and meticulously. They make every reasonable effort to follow such teachings with

unusual exactitude and should anyone propose to introduce anything contrary to the teaching or even doubtful in its character, it would be rejected and vehemently opposed. They insist upon everyone's following such teaching carefully and especially on certain practices that they have come to regard most essential. They become very much concerned when they have fallen short in their limited category of religious duties. These same people, however, frequently are very indifferent to their moral obligations. God's commandments relative to right living seem to give them very little concern. There are some of these people who are religiously zealous who seem to think God's teaching on truthfulness, honesty and fairness is altogether optional. There are others who seem to consider his teaching on covetousness, or maliciousness, or adultery less vital in their relationship with God than teaching on worship. Consequently, adulterers occupy pews of some churches every Sunday. There are still other people who may follow the practices just mentioned in a reasonable way but who seem to have minimized the importance of God's teaching on kindness, compassion, mercy, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and forbearance. In fact, if we are to judge by their lives, they seem to have practically forgotten that these things characterize people who are pleasing in the sight of God; that they are necessary in the lives of people if they are to be new creatures; that their presence is the most personal evidence that the love of God abides in them.

There is another group of people that seems to be growing somewhat in number that reverses the emphasis

on these two classes of teachings and have carried it to an equal extreme. Not that they are so thorough in their detailed practices of honesty, charity and personal purity but theoretically, at least, they have elevated God's teachings that concern man in his relationship to his fellow man far above his teachings relative to church affairs. Many have taken privileges in matters of worship as well as practices involving becoming Christians, and some have even gone so far as to virtually discard the teachings relative to worship and church affairs or to modify them to accord with their own wishes or convenience. In all of this, we should never forget that if we love God we will keep his commandments, whatever they are, whether they concern becoming a Christian, Christian worship, or how we should treat our neighbor. A failure in any case to make an honest effort to practice those things that will please God is not only a failure to show that we love him but a definite evidence that we do not love him in the way that we should.

We hear the cry from different quarters today, "I believe in a practical religion." Such people give little consideration to church and propose to justify their action by pointing to James' statement, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). In doing so, they evidently think only of the first part of James' statement and conclude that pure religion is a matter of charity. This is a practice that frequently results in a perversion of Bible teaching. There are two parts to pure

religion and Christianity includes both—"Visiting the fatherless and the widows," and "keeping oneself unspotted from the world." How is a person going to keep himself "unspotted?" Can he live without sin? Where is the person who is not mentally disordered who would claim to live a spotless life? The only way to be unspotted is to clean up and the only way to keep oneself unspotted is to keep cleaning up; and the only way to clean up is through the blood of Christ and this is not found in charity but rather in those practices that relate to church or to God's provision for man's purification. Jesus came to purify as well as redeem (Titus 2:14).

Another classification of God's teaching has been based upon human reasoning—doing the things which one can see reason for doing but ignoring others because they see no particular benefit in them. Not that those who pursue such a course are so scrupulously zealous in their observance of the acts for which they can see reason, but they discard all feeling of responsibility for doing that for which they see no reason. The sad part of this situation is the fact that the use of this rationalization indicates two personal weaknesses. One, such a person is lacking in his understanding of Bible teaching or he would see unmistakable reason for doing everything that God would have him to do. And two, it indicates a lack of love for God, for a real love seeks to do what God wants done and a willingness to reject his commandment or wish in the matter not only shows a lack of love but is an insult to the wisdom of God. When anyone admits that a teaching is God's teaching to the people of this generation and

refuses to practice it, he is belittling God's wisdom by accepting his own instead. If we truly love God, all we need to know is that God wants us to do it and it will be a joy to follow his wishes in the matter whether we see the reason or not.

The obligations that some people seem to feel in the matter of following God's commandments seem to be determined largely by the matter of convenience. They will attend worship, they will tell the truth, they will visit the sick or help in some other good cause if they can do so conveniently but if a visitor comes on Sunday or they have work that they want to do, or they want to go on a picnic, their opportunity of showing their love for God by going to worship him seems to be forgotten. In fact, in the mad rush of things they just do not have time to do many of the things that the Bible teaches them to do and consequently that teaching just does not seem to apply to them. If you ever find your business or general social activities seeming to demand your time that is needed for faithful obedience to the teaching of your God, do not forget that the real test of love is sacrifice. A mother shows her real love for her child not by an occasional act of kindness that can be done without inconvenience but by the personal sacrifice that she makes—by what she gives up to do for him. Our real love for God is shown by our willingness to give up personal plans and activities in order to serve him faithfully. If we only serve God by convenience, in reality our service may not be to the honor and glory of God but to the end of pacifying our conscience.

There are still other people who attach reasonable importance to doing the teachings of God that they know but seem very little concerned about the things that they do not know. This, again, is an indication of a lack of love for God, for those who love God not only practice, as best they can, his teachings with which they are acquainted but seek to know all that God would have them do. This simply means that if we love God, we will study his word that we may know to avoid those things that are displeasing to him and find joy in doing those things that are pleasing. I know of nothing that shows more lack of love for God than the failure to study the Bible. There are so many people perfectly content with their Christian effort because they are doing about what their neighbors are doing or what the most of the people in their church are doing.

There is one other outstanding test of man's love for God stated in the New Testament. It has been alluded to in some of the earlier discussions but should receive further consideration. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). Here is a clear-cut statement. What is meant by the world and the things that are in the world? By some, this is thought to mean the wicked and idolatrous people of the world and the immoral and sinful practices such as they engage in. Certainly one could not love such an evil life and at the same time love God who is the acme of goodness and purity. But the next two verses do not seem to indicate that "love of the world" is to be applied only to that

which is vile, beastly or carnal. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:16-17). First we note that all that is in the world and of the world is described with the three phrases, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life." These are the influences which hold a person to the temporal things of this life in contrast to the things that are eternal. These are the avenues through which the things of this world appeal to the selfishness in man's nature. It was in terms of these three that Eve was tempted and turned away from that which was pleasing in the sight of God. The temptation of Jesus as given in the fourth chapter of Matthew is based upon these same three human appeals.

In fact, it is through these that man has found satisfactions and become so strongly attached to the temporal values of life that he has given his time and energies to such and they have come to constitute what Paul speaks of as the "god of this world." The "god of this world" is Jehovah's only rival for the heart of man. This is the influence to which Paul credits the ineffectiveness of the gospel. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). This difficulty is also suggested by Jesus in his question to

the Jews. "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (John 5:44). This is also illustrated by some of the rulers of the Jews. "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" (John 12:42-43). Jesus was evidently alluding to this same danger when he said to the disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23). Paul also warned against it. "But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:9-10). Surely it is wrong to love those things that are low, and wicked in themselves, but to love the things of this world generally as they pertain to our selfish enjoyment and become ends within themselves is also wrong, being an evidence that we do not have the love of God in our hearts. When we find greater joy in these things as such and they consume our time and energy, taking us away from our opportunities to honor God, they become influences for evil. Of course, since we are physical people and live in a physical world, many of the things of this world may be used in maintaining ourselves and sustaining us in living effective Christian lives, but when our money, our farms, our



business, our sports, our recreation, etc., have taken the center of our interest they have become our god and we have dishonored Jehovah. Even though we may hold to a form of religion and give some attendance upon it when the things of this world rob God of the first place in our lives and hearts and we find more joy in them than we do in doing those things which please God, he is no longer in reality our God and we no longer love him as such.

James gives us a similar warning when he says, "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). When we allow ourselves to come into that close relationship with the world, when we love it as we do a friend, we find our satisfactions there and are turned away from Jehovah. Our relationship with God has been dishonored or become impure.

I doubt that there is anyone who has a reasonable acquaintance of the Bible teaching that will question the soundness of the teaching that those who love God will make an honest effort to keep his commandments. However, there are people who insist that the word "commandments" as it is employed here does not refer to the performance of detailed acts of behavior but rather to the two basic commandments that have been discussed in preceding lessons—love God, and love man. If this be true, then the apostle John made some very peculiar and confusing statements in his first epistle. Substituting this idea in I John 5:3, we have John saying, "For this is the love of God, that we love God and love man, and his

commandments are not grievous." A similar substitution in the second verse of the chapter gives us this. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God when we love God and love man." From these statements it is evident that the commandments referred to are not the commandments to love God and to love man but those that indicate acts through which love for God and man is expressed. Jesus was referring to the same when he said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (John 14:21). "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Here it is evident that Jesus is speaking of the detailed teaching that he had given his apostles to follow just as he had followed those which he had received from his Father. His following God's teachings was a manifestation of his love for God and for man. This would also be true of the apostles in their love for Christ. This is also shown in Jesus' question, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) which was preceded by instruction on definite practices that they should follow.

Furthermore, we have seen from our earlier discussion that love is not an overt act to be performed but a favorable personal feeling which demands and motivates behavior as expressions of that feeling. If we love God, we will seek to do the things that are pleasing in his sight and certainly these are the things which he has taught us

to do. We not only show our love for God by keeping his commandments but this is the only way that we can show our love for God. In dealing with men with their human needs and in their common place relationships, we may ignore some requests but lavish our affections upon the person in some other way but this is not the case in our dealing with God. God has no human needs to be satisfied. He knows man; he loves man and he is not unreasonable in the requests that he makes of man. He is also fully aware of man's frailties. He is longsuffering, forbearing, and forgiving of those who are humble and who seek to put God first, but we should not forget that he can distinguish between inability and unwillingness. He can distinguish between an honest failure and a failure to honestly try. It is one thing to enthrone God in your heart and to honor him, or show your love for him, by turning away from your own wisdom and in humility and simplicity put your trust in him as a little child, wholeheartedly seeking to follow his teaching but falling short. It is quite a different thing to fail because you are unwilling to surrender your will completely to the will of God; because you are unwilling to honor his word by following it implicitly; because you do not love him sufficiently to put him first. Remember that if you love God, you will act like you love—you will keep his commandments.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 8

1. How is this same test of love expressed in Bible statements?
2. How did Jesus show the inconsistency of those who called him Lord and failed to love or honor him as Lord?

3. What comparative evaluation do some people give to positive and negative commandments?
4. What distinction do people sometimes make between the importance of negative commandments?
5. What is the probable basis of such distinctions and what shows it to be unsound?
6. What other classification of God's teaching has given rise to misplaced emphasis?
7. Describe the two extreme cases of misplaced emphasis.
8. What classification has been based on human reasoning? What personal weaknesses does it make evident?
9. What should one who finds it inconvenient to serve God not forget?
10. Name another class of God's teachings that people do not consider important.
11. What can man not love if he loves the Father?
12. What is included in loving the world?
13. How have people been blinded to the gospel?
14. Give other warnings against the danger of loving the things of this world.
15. When does God cease to be our God?
16. What does James call those who become friends of the world?
17. Show that making "commandments" to be kept loving God and man contradicts other Bible teaching.
18. Show that the very nature of love demands that the commandments be acts that show love.

## LESSON 9

### HOW TO LOVE MORE

If that which has been presented in the preceding lessons has been accepted as the truth, if you have come to believe that man must love God and must love his fellow man in order to inherit eternal life, if you are serious about the matter, there is a definite question that comes to you very forcibly. This question is, "How can one come to love God and to love man?" Or, "How can one increase his love for God and man? By what method, technique, or procedure can this be accomplished?" Or, if you have weighed this teaching as it applies to you personally, which should be done by every human being regardless of his religious status, you may be beset by any of a number of related questions. You may be wondering, "Is there anything I can do, or what can I do, that I may love God, or that I may love God more?" You may be content with your love for God but your question may be, "How can I love man? What is there to be done about the matter?" You may even be satisfied with your love for man generally but you may be concerned with the question, "How can I love my enemies?" These are all mere subdivisions of the same question, "How can I love as I ought to love?" The man who does not love his enemy does not love his fellow man as he ought to love him. If he does not love his fellow man, he does not love

God as he ought to love him. These matters are inseparable. They are all accomplished through the same power and by the same general procedure.

Surely after expending the effort that I have to make you conscience of your need of a true love for God and for your fellow man, I would be unfair to you and wholly unworthy of your confidence if I did not make a sincere effort to tell you how this love may be acquired. This I shall earnestly and prayerfully attempt to do. However, in view of its vital importance to you, I beg of you in the interest of your own soul and the glory of your own God, that you pause here and pray earnestly and wholeheartedly that you may have the full power of understanding and discernment that you may in no way be deceived or misguided and that you may in nowise fail in your personal application of everything that is true and trustworthy. My prayer for you is that God may keep you, shield you, and guide you in your honest search for, and effort to walk in, the way of life.

Before beginning the constructive discussion of this subject, I wish to discourage a practice that is sometimes indulged in that is both ineffective and dangerous. Whether we are concerned with our own personal development or are engaged in assisting a friend to a greater love for God and man, we should never resort to the naive practice of emphasizing the fact that God commands it. A command to love will never produce love any more than the command to wheat to grow will ever produce wheat. A command may produce an act, even an act that is helpful to somebody, an act that is appar-

ently charitable, but love is not an act. It is a favorable personal feeling, a product of experience. If either wheat or love is produced by commandment, it will be a miracle. It will be the direct result of the operation of the creative power possessed and applied by the one who gives the commandment. Wheat will grow and produce under one set of basic conditions. There must be a seed, moisture, and warmth, and when these conditions are complied with and there is no disruption, wheat will be produced. Why? Because it is God's law—his law for the production of wheat. It does not fail. In the case of love, there is a seed and there are conditions under which it will produce. These must be met and when they are met, love will be produced. God's laws are immutable, not only his physical laws but his spiritual laws. We do not presume to produce wheat by a miraculous power. Then let us carefully avoid a similar presumption in the field of spiritual production. Neither do we expect to produce wheat by accident. If we want to produce wheat, we plant the seed. If we want to produce love, let us plant the seed. We should not expect to produce love by accident.

Although lessons two and three in this book have emphasized the fact that we are commanded of God to love him and to love our fellow man, it was not done with the hope of producing love in any man but rather to make it unmistakably clear that every man must love God and man if he would inherit eternal life. The purpose has been to show man's need and not to supply man's need.

Just here, let us recall the fact that when Jesus said,

“This do and thou shalt live,” he was speaking of that which was necessary to the inheritance of eternal life. The question that had been asked by the lawyer in the tenth chapter of Luke was not, “What shall I do to earn eternal life?” but rather, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Eternal life cannot be earned, neither can it be merited. Man in his incompleteness, his weakness, his sinfulness cannot in any sense earn eternal life. It is the free gift of God (Rom. 6:23). Those who receive eternal life will receive it by inheritance. An inheritance is a gift.

Let us observe next that inheritance is based upon family relationship. There is no way for one to buy an inheritance to himself. He may buy another's inheritance, but the very nature of the case makes it impossible for him to buy, or by virtue of effort expended, to earn his own inheritance. That which one buys is his by right of purchase. That which he earns is his by right of wages or indebtedness. That which he inherits, in the true sense of the word, is his by right of relationship. For example: should I die without a will that sets forth special bequests, that which I had held in possession would be inherited by the members of my family and by no one else. There is no one outside of my family that could secure one penny of my possessions as an inheritance. Should I have outstanding debts at the time, my creditors could secure payments from my estate but to them that would not be an inheritance; it would be the paying of my debts to them. The same would be true if I had incurred a financial obligation to one of my children. That



which he would receive in payment of the debt would not be inheritance. In fact, in such a case, he would simply be having returned to him that which was his. His inheritance would be that which he received from me by virtue of being a member of my family.

Let us observe further that not only is my child's right of inheritance based upon his relationship in my family but no one can deny him his right of inheritance unless he has been disinherited by me. But unless I give evidence to the authorities who are responsible for my estate that a child has been disinherited, there is no one who has that power. After my decease the other children might decide that one does not deserve a part in the inheritance, but there is nothing that they can do about it. Even my wife might agree with them that this son has brought reproach upon the family and should not receive a share of the inheritance but that will not change the matter. However, if I pronounce the son unworthy of the inheritance and leave evidence to those who are responsible for the final disposition of my property that he has been disinherited, he will fail to receive his inheritance though he was born into my family and continued to wear my name after he had become displeasing to me.

The same is true in our divine family relationship. Our inheritance of eternal life is dependent upon membership in God's family—a membership that is honorably maintained. This is declared by the apostle Paul. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer

with him, that we may be also glorified with him” (Rom. 8:16-17). In this statement two things are unmistakably plain. First, if we are God’s children, we are heirs of God; we are in that relationship that gives us hope of eternal inheritance, that which lies within God’s power and which he has promised to his children. Second, this is conditioned upon our honorably maintaining this relationship, or living as children of God ought to live. This is expressed in the last clause of the quotation, “if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.” This certainly says a great deal. If we are worthy of the place of children in his family, we will not merely worship him by convenience or maintain a formal relationship in the name of religion, but we will love him and serve him not merely when it is convenient, not only when we must sacrifice, but even when we must suffer persecution. Paul suggests the strength of the tie which binds God’s children to him as he closes this eighth chapter of Romans. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39). While he was here, Jesus declared, “For who-

soever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). Paul wrote Timothy, "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:11-12). These statements certainly suggest that being a child of God, pleasing in his sight is certainly not merely a matter of passive church membership but rather a thorough-going devotion to God and to his family. May we more and more come into the true situation which Paul describes in II Corinthians 5:14-15, being constrained by the love of Christ that we no longer live unto ourselves but unto him who for our sakes died and rose again.

From our illustration above, we should draw one other point of comparison. Of those who have become God's children, who have been born into his family, God alone has the power to disinherit. Many times some of God's children may think that others of God's children have proven themselves unworthy of their relationship and surely have forfeited their right to the inheritance. This is not necessarily true and is a practice which we should be very slow to indulge in. When we are tempted to pass on such matters, we should recall what Paul said about himself. "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (I Cor. 4:3-4). And since on such occasions, we generally think well of ourselves, we should

also remember his declaration, "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (II Cor. 10:18), and also his question, "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4).

Since the right of inheritance begins with the family relationship, and since love for God and man are requisite to the inheritance of eternal life, it is apparent that the family relationship and love, the personal feeling that honorably sustains the relationship, have a common origin. To express the matter differently, the process of becoming a member of God's family results from the same power or influence that causes one to love God and his fellow man. God did not merely command man to love him nor to enter into his family relationship. He provided the power that would accomplish both if man will only allow it to become operative in his life, but if man refuses this there is no other power under heaven by which either of these may be accomplished.

The Bible describes one's entering into the divine family relationship under the figure of a birth. This does not necessarily mean that it parallels a birth in every minute detail, but that there is a very close similarity in the fundamental aspects. Let us recall some of the basic aspects of the birth that we may better understand the information that is being presented to us in this figure. At this time, however, we shall not examine all of the details but only those that are particularly pertinent to our present discussion.

The word birth as it is used to designate the total

process by which a new member is added to the family is made up of two main parts, the begetting and the bringing forth. There can be no bringing forth without a begetting and a begetting must result in a bringing forth if the due course of nature is not interfered with. This makes it evident that the true power that is responsible for the new individual is that which becomes effective in the begetting.

The begetting of the individual as a new member of the family is through the instrumentality of a seed. This seed is composed of germ plasm from the two parents. In this germ plasm resides the power of producing a new individual, not according to miracle but according to law. When these two units of germ plasm that have been prepared according to the law of nature as prescribed by Jehovah come into union with each other the principle of life provided by God himself is vitalized and begins the growth process which, unless interrupted, results in a new child as a member of that family. However, this is not the only power that resides in the seed. When this seed is formed and deposited in the divinely appointed environment, it not only begins the production of a new individual but determines the personal features of that individual also. The height of statue, color of hair, facial features, etc., are fully determined by the seed at the begetting. This is commonly called the biological inheritance. In many families there is enough in common in the inheritance to characterize the members of the family thus providing an unmistakable family characteristic. Thus the seed contains the principle of life and also the

determiners of the family resemblance. With these features of the physical birth in mind, let us turn our attention now to the parallel to be found in the spiritual birth.

The Bible teaching makes it very clear that the spiritual begetting is through the instrumentality of a seed.\* It also makes it very plain that the seed is the word of God. Peter wrote "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:22-25). The last statement of this quotation together with the fact stated in the twelfth verse of the same chapter, that the gospel was preached unto these people, leaves no doubt that the incorruptible seed, the word of the Lord by which they had been begotten, was the gospel that had been preached unto them. Also the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians that they had been begotten by the same power, "For in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel" (I Cor. 4:15). James, in referring to himself, the people to whom he was writing and the Christians of his day generally, said, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18). Here we see that the

whole matter of begetting and bringing forth as new creatures is through the instrumentality of the word of truth. These three statements from Peter, Paul and James settle the matter beyond question. The incorruptible seed by which one is begotten into the family of God is the word of the Lord, the gospel, the word of truth. This seed holds the power of begetting into the family of God as the human seed holds the power of begetting in the human family. With this Paul fully agrees in his declaration, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

When the gospel, as it was delivered through the Lord Jesus Christ and preached by the apostles, is pointed out as the power of God unto salvation, some people seem to consider such teaching contradictory to the teaching in Jesus' statement to Nicodemus that he must be born of the spirit. This, however is not the case. Although we have not been provided a detailed description or analysis of the power of the word and the power of the Spirit, we do have statements in God's word which show that through the word the Spirit does come to its effectiveness in the process of begetting. When the Jews were murmuring against Jesus because of the teaching that he was the bread that came down out of heaven, he declared to them, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in your-

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\*For a more complete discussion see *God's Plan and Me*, Book I, Lesson 16.

selves" (John 6:53). The disciples also became disturbed over the matter; whereupon Jesus declared, "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63). This was Jesus' way of saying that his teaching would bring to them the spirit which they needed and the life which they so much desired. This Paul implied by his question to the Galatians. "This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). Here it is indicated that the Galatians had received the Spirit by hearing, believing and receiving the gospel. In the fourteenth verse of the same chapter, Paul stated that the promise of the Spirit was to be received through faith and in the Roman letter he stated that, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Paul also pointed out the working power of the word of God to the Thessalonians. "And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13). James urged, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).

Is not the close relationship between the word of God and the Spirit indicated by the fact that the Bible teaches clearly that we are begotten by the word and that we are born of the Spirit? Is it not good judgment that we



concern ourselves with that which we are told is the power through which we are begotten making sure that the incorruptible seed is given that place within us where it may work, that through its power we may become children of God and heirs of eternal life? When we seek to bring one into the family of God, to cause one to become a child of God, would it not be reasonable to follow the lead of Peter, Paul, James and others by preaching the word, by implanting within them the seed by which they are begotten to be new creatures? Why should we refuse to plant the seed because we do not fully understand the mystery of its working? Or why should we destroy the effectiveness of the seed by our effort to explain the power by which the new individual develops? What would happen if we adopted a similar attitude toward the process of human reproduction? The physical birth is enshrouded in little less mystery than the spiritual birth. All that man knows about the matter is that if he complies with God's law a new individual will be the result. How does the law operate? He does not know. In all other fields we make use of God's laws and leave the mystery of their working to him. Why not do the same in the spiritual field? We know that when the living seed is deposited in the place for which God provided it and under the conditions prescribed by his law that it will produce. This is just as true of his spiritual seed, the word of God, as of the human seed of the flesh, or of the seed of the plant. Then let us faithfully plant the word of God in the hearts of men with the full assurance that it will accomplish that for which it was provided.

Having established the fact that we are begotten by the word of God, let us return to our parallel between the spiritual and physical begetting. In the begetting of the human infant, the seed contains the principle of life. In the spiritual begetting, the same is true. Faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ is that which gives rise to spiritual life. Without it, we would be without knowledge of God and without a single impulse towards spiritual living. We have learned from Paul that faith comes by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17), and we learned from John that faith which comes by the word of God is that which is begotten of God. "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). Thus, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). When one truly believes the gospel, the power of God in the word of God, the seed has become effective and the new creature, the spiritual being, is begotten. Faith is the principle of spiritual life. Thus, John declares, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (I John 5:1).

In our study of human begetting we found that the seed not only carried the principle of life but also the determiners of the family resemblance that were to be found in the new member of the family. This is also true in the case of the word of God as the seed. It not only produces faith, the vitalizing principle of spiritual life, but also it carries that which produces the family resemblance, the family characteristic in the divine family.

What is the divine family characteristic? This question is answered by John. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8). This statement leaves no doubt. The family characteristic in the divine family is love. This is the unfailing family characteristic. Every individual who truly becomes a child of God, having been begotten by the word of God, has the family characteristic. It is a natural product of the incorruptible seed just as much as facial features, or height of stature of the human being is determined by the human seed. Anyone who does not have a true love for God and man is not begotten of God and does not even know God.

It is somewhat strange that through the years repeated emphasis has been given to the fact that faith comes from the word of God, the seed, but that love comes from the same seed seems to have been almost completely overlooked. Consequently many people have a very distorted conception of Christianity. For the most part, a narrow, doctrinal type of teaching on faith has been given to those who would listen, resulting in some sort of formal acceptance of Jesus as Christ. In most cases, it has crystalized into some form of church membership in which the individual has learned to trust, contributing to a sort of "churchanity" which too frequently has replaced Christianity, providing a religion devoid of the great moving power of the gospel. The gospel, the word of God, not only provides through its prophetic presentation and its final revelation the unmistakable evidences

that Jesus is the Christ but also provides a revelation of God's love for man in the same word, in the presentation of the same facts. This Paul sets forth briefly as follows: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he had been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4). The death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ constitute the climactic evidence that Jesus is the Christ and at the same time portray the loving kindness and the tender mercies of Jehovah in giving his Son and the great love of the Christ in giving himself. How can one truly believe the facts as evidences of his sonship and fail to see in them the revelation of God's love? And we have already pointed out, a recognition of God's great love for us is the beginning of our love for him. It begets within us that favorable personal feeling toward him. As John declared, "We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

From all of this it is evident that God has not merely commanded man to love him, but has revealed himself as being so thoroughly lovable that anyone who truly accepts his revelation as being divine, fully believing the story of his wonderful love, will be impelled to love him in return. In other words, God's irresistible power has been given to man through his word and it will work without fail in the heart of everyone who believes it, remolding the life of everyone who honors it as the word of God making it his supreme guide. It will transform him from the selfish creature who finds his greatest joy in his

own lustful indulgence to one who partakes of the nature of the Son of God and has learned through experience that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." Herein lies the power of the gospel.

If you want to love God, give his word a place in your life. If you want to love God more, give his word a greater place in your life. Study his word daily and meditate upon his great love for you frequently. Follow your good impulses habitually and you will not only soon discover that your favorable personal feeling toward God is stronger but you will find yourself wanting to do more and realizing greater joy in your Christian living. In other words, you will love God more and it will express itself more fully in your doing those things that are pleasing to him. In the words of Jesus, "For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 9

1. If you believe man must love God and man, and accept the matter seriously, what question comes to you very forcibly?
2. What failure would make the author of this book unworthy of your confidence?
3. What prayer are you asked to pray?
4. To what should we never resort to in our efforts to cause people to love God more?
5. Why will a command not produce love? What will produce it?
6. Why has the fact that we are commanded to love God and man been emphasized in preceding chapters?
7. What was Jesus telling the lawyer how to do?
8. What is inheritance based upon? Why can it never be earned?
9. How only can a child fail to inherit?
10. What two things is our eternal inheritance conditioned upon?
11. What does this imply is necessary to be worthy of being called God's children?

12. Since the power to disinherit is God's alone what practice should we be very slow to indulge in?
13. What reasoning suggests that man's divine family relationship and love have a common origin?
14. Entering God's family is described under what figure?
15. State the two parts to a birth and their relationship to each other.
16. The begetting is through what instrumentality and what two powers does it carry?
17. From Bible quotation show that spiritual begetting is through a similar instrumentality.
18. Show from Bible teaching that being begotten by the word in nowise contradicts being born of the spirit.
19. Give reasoning to show that our emphasis should be upon planting the seed.
20. What is it that is begotten of God in the new birth?
21. Besides the principle of life what else is carried by the word of God as the seed?
22. What is the divine family characteristic?
23. In dealing with God's word as the seed what has been overlooked by some people?
24. Show how love for God will result from the same word that produces faith.
25. In what does the power of the gospel lie?
26. What should one do who wants to love God more?

## LESSON 10

### HOW TO LOVE MORE (Continued)

There is one very important exception in our parallel between the physical begetting and the spiritual begetting. In the physical begetting the seed that holds the power for the beginning of life and bears the determiners of the family characteristics is provided in one organic unit, fully complete within itself and to which nothing can be added; while in the case of the spiritual process only a small portion of the seed is received at the beginning. Not only can more seed be added but more seed must be added if the life and the development is to continue. In reality, the physical begetting is the beginning of a new organism that grows structurally directly from the component parts in the seed, while the spiritual begetting is the rebeginning or reforming of an old creature into a new one through the influence of the seed. The former is a physical maturation, the latter is a personal transformation through mental control. With these things Paul agrees in his exhortation to the people at Rome. "And be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). Note first that he urges a transformation. He appeals to them to change, to become different, not to be fashioned according to this world but

to be transformed. Next, observe that this is to be accomplished by the renewing of their minds, by a changing of their ideas and consequently their sense of values. They were to replace their human wisdom by that wisdom which God had revealed. There were to be new creatures with new ways of thinking and new ways of acting. They should forget their selfish pride and learn to be humble. In the Philippian letter Paul describes the kind of mind that people should have to bring about this transformation. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8). This change in mind is from the selfish to the unselfish, from a love for self to a love for others.

Renewing the mind, or changing one's mental concept, changing one's sense of values, changing one's way of thinking is the only way to change the individual. As long as a person thinks what he is doing is right he will continue to practice it and as long as he sees no real value in doing the things that he leaves undone he will continue to neglect them; but when he fully recognizes that what he is doing is bad and what he is leaving undone would be good to practice he will change his way of doing. Thus, in the gospel plan of salvation, it is clear that God has adjusted his method to the basic operative principle of human nature which he instilled in man at



the beginning. When you change man's thinking, you change man's feeling and when you have changed the way he feels toward things, you will have changed his spirit and you will have changed his practices relative to those things. When a person has come to love what he hated and to hate what he loved he has truly become a new creature.\*

God not only revealed his great love for man that man might be led to love him but knowing man's nature and his great need of an abiding consciousness of God's love, he gave man a memorial to serve this very purpose. During the last passover supper, of Jesus it is said, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:19-20). In writing the Corinthians about this memorial Paul said, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:23-26). In the

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\*For a more detailed discussion of this see, **GOD'S PLAN AND ME**, Book I, Lesson 18.

twentieth verse of this same chapter Paul refers to it as the "Lord's supper," and this is the term by which it is commonly known today. We note in Luke's record when Jesus gave this supper to the apostles he said, "This do in remembrance of me." In Paul's instruction to the Corinthians in terms of what he had received of the Lord we are told that with each part of the supper Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." As this instruction was given to the apostles and was also given to the disciples as Paul received it from the Lord, surely it is vital instruction to those who would be his disciples today. What does it mean to partake of that supper in remembrance of him?

In the hopes of making the matter a little more realistic, I am going to take the privilege of using an illustration that is somewhat personal in character. In January 1928, my father had influenza which was followed by pneumonia. The last news that I had had from him was that he was getting along nicely and since my physical condition suggested that I might be taking the flu, I had not been to see him. About eleven o'clock on Saturday night my telephone rang. It was a call from my father's bedside. The message given to me was, "Your father's heart has weakened considerably. He is not expected to live two hours." I rushed immediately to my father's bedside, some forty miles away, arriving sometime after midnight. I never knew whether he ever recognized me or not. He was never able to call my name. Then came the hours of watchful waiting. The night wore away and the morning hours of the new day dragged heavily by, his heart

becoming gradually weaker and his breathing more laborious. As I sat by his bedside and held his hand in mine, the end came at eleven fifteen. As he exhaled his last breath, I called out, "Good-by, Dad."

My father was a good father. He was kind, loving, tenderhearted and sympathetic. He was self-sacrificing, economical sometime to the point of frugality, and worked hard to provide the needs and comforts for his family. My father tried to do unto others as he would have them do unto him and he tried to train his children in the same upright manner of living.

I have a photograph of my father as a memorial of him. When I look at it, it brings back to me a remembrance of him. What do I remember when I behold his likeness? Do I merely recall his physical features—that I had a father about six feet in height, slender and fairly erect with certain physical features and a pleasant disposition? Is that all that I would recall in the remembrance of my father whom I have loved dearly? You know better than that. My mind would be flooded by those emotionally toned experiences which had drawn me to him—the care which he had always shown to provide for my need and comfort, and the kindness, patience and sympathy that characterized his efforts to guide me into the better ways of life. In brief, my remembrance of him primarily would be those manifestations of his love for me that would awaken in my heart a wish that I might see him again or might in some way show my love for him.

When I partake of the bread and of the cup in remem-

brance of my dear Lord, what do I remember? Do I merely recall the fact that a man named Jesus was crucified just outside the gates of Jerusalem for the sins of the world? This might be true if he had never meant anything to me personally. Or do I not rather recall with personal meaning some of his experiences that are so graphically depicted in Bible record that evidence his great love for me? And if I love him, can I think of these things without having my love aroused to the point that I will make a greater effort to show my love for him? Can I recall the fact that he, "Counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8), without being moved to admiration? Can I go with him to the Garden of Gethsemane and experience any of the tenseness of that hour as I tarry in the shadows and hear him lift up his voice in prayer to God, "If it be thy will, let this cup pass from me," and see those tears which fell like great drops of blood upon the ground, and know that he exchanged the brightness and glory of heaven for the shadows of Gethsemane that I might exchange darkness and despair for glory and eternal bliss and not be filled with eternal gratitude? Can I believe the scene in Pilot's judgment hall where the innocent was condemned for the guilty, where he wore the crown of thorns, where he was mocked, abused, mistreated that I might wear the crown of life, and not be moved with gratitude? Can I

follow him to Golgotha and see him nailed to the cross; can I behold his agony there and hear that cry that was wrung from his very heart, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and not be inspired to greater effort to live for him who died for me? Surely we cannot truly remember him without recalling some of these things which so effectively remind us of his wonderful love and the love of God who, "So loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life." Surely we cannot believe in Jesus as our Lord and God as our loving heavenly Father and feel a part in this wonderful love and not be moved to a greater love and impelled to a life of greater service.

May we return to our illustration again. Suppose that my father had known me when I reached his bedside and shortly before his departure he had said to me, "Now son, I have tried to teach you what is right and good and honorable and to warn you against that which is evil, that which will bring you unhappiness and will dishonor my name by which you are called. I want you to promise me that you will make an honest effort to follow my instructions." And I said to him, "Dad, you have always been good and kind and helpful to me and I promise to live by your instructions as best I can." Had this happened, what would I remember when I look upon the photograph of my father? Could I remember him without remembering that promise? Could I recall that promise and his love for me without considering how well I had kept my promise? And if I discovered that I had been

unfaithful, having grown careless had failed to do some of the things I ought to do, or having been attracted by that which was unbecoming I had indulged in that which he had told me not to do, would I not find myself penitent at heart and would I not resolve to readjust my manner of life? And if I truly loved my father, would I not set out with a new determination and an increased effort to fulfill the promise that I made to him?

It is true that I did not stand by the cross where Jesus died and make to him the promise that I would faithfully follow his teachings and not engage in those things that would bring reproach upon his name, and neither did you. But if we have accepted his gospel, we personally accepted him as our Lord and ruler and promised to honor his teaching in our lives day by day because of the death which he died upon the cross, the very story of which was the foundation of my love for him. Can I seriously remember him without thinking of that promise? And can I think of that promise without looking into my own life to see if I have been faithful to it? In my honest examination should I find that I have not made a faithful effort to do the things that I promised to do and to leave undone the things that he has taught me not to do, would not this remembrance of his love bring me to repentance? Would I not renew my vow and my determination with the help of God to do better in the days ahead than in those that are passed and gone? Certainly if I love him, this will I do and if I love the Christ, I will love the Father and will find a joy in showing my love by honoring his teaching through obedience.

Then what would it mean to me and what should it mean to you to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him? If we partake of it sincerely in remembrance of him, our love should be renewed and strengthened every time this is done. We should remember our promise, reviewing our lives to see wherein we have fallen short of our promise and redoubling our efforts that they may truly represent our love for him. And if we remember the great love of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ this way week by week, and invest our time, energy and money in showing our love for them, we shall come to love more and more.

Since there is this evident purpose in partaking of the Lord's Supper, it suggests the need for frequent participation in this memorial that one's love may be kept alive and growing and one may become gradually transformed to be more Christ-like. This should lend encouragement to our following what was apparently the established practice among the early disciples of keeping this supper on the first day of every week.

Trusting that the way for improving our love for God has been made clear, we now turn to the question, "How can we love man more?" If our answer to the former question is clear, the answer to this question will be easy. We can learn to love man more by learning to love God more for the more we love and serve God the more will we comply with the laws that govern the development of love in our relationship with man. Let us examine the matter more closely.

The more we love God the more we will serve God,

and the more we serve God the more we will love man. Why is this true? First we need to realize that our service to God is service to man, that there is no other way of serving God. If we do not serve man, we do not serve God. May we first observe that serving is doing something for someone, is accomplishing something. If we serve God, we accomplish something, or we do something for God.

Now let us raise the question, "What does God want accomplished? What does he want done? What did he send Jesus into the world to do?" In Jesus' prayer to God not long before his betrayal he said, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (John 17:4). Of his work Jesus had formerly said, "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Surely he came into the world to serve God, but the service was rendered directly to man. He came to save man. He came to redeem. He came to turn man away from his wickedness and be the propitiation for his sin. That is the one thing that God wants accomplished. That is the one thing for which Jesus prepared the way. He completed his part of the service, but he did not complete the whole service. While he was in the world, he was the light of the world. He revealed the way of life to the apostles and prepared them to reveal it to the world. He said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). In his admonition to the Philippians, Paul indicates that this same work or responsibility has been passed on to all Christians.



“Do all things without murmurings and questions: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:14-16). Thus, the service that God wants rendered is to hold forth the light of life, to lead men out of darkness away from their wickedness and to teach them to honor God. So just as Jesus served God by serving men, we likewise serve God by serving men. And may I say again unless we serve men by living the Christ-like life among them and for them, we fail in our service to God.

But why will this cause us to love men? If we sincerely love God, we will receive a satisfaction, a joy in serving God. But the service we render to God is also the service to man and the more we serve man in the satisfaction of serving God, the more we will love man. This is the principle which we have had before. The more we invest in man the more we will love him. As Jesus said, “Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also” (Matt. 6:21). This is the same principle that underlies the mother’s love for her child. She loves him because she has done so much for him, not because he has done so much for her. We can come to love people because we have done so much for them with the satisfaction that what we have done is pleasing to God. However, in most cases where we render a real service to man, we receive further satisfaction from his friendship and his thanks to us. If we accomplish the service in leading him to the light,

we have double joy—joy in our service to God and joy in the friendship of the one whom we have served.

Our final question in our discussion of how to love more is, “How can we love our enemies?” Since this is a very vital question, let us seek all the help we can get on the matter. May we begin by asking, “Who is an enemy?” To which someone may answer, “An enemy is one who does you wrong, one who does something or says something that hurts you.” An enemy is not only one that is considered unlovable, but one who does things that are against you. There is an exception, however, to this description of an enemy. Not infrequently does a child say things or do things that hurt, but we do not think of the child as an enemy and many times the child has no such intention. He is innocent in his injury. We do not become angry with him. If we were only more understanding, we would find that many of the words and many of the acts of grown people that we consider unfriendly could be overlooked on the same grounds. Many people who are of adult stature are still children in the matter of personal development. Many times the things that they engage in that offend us are engaged in because they have learned no better way. This does not imply that they are feeble-minded for frequently their failure to grow is emotional rather than mental. In some respects they are objects of pity as is true of the child who for some reason acquires socially displeasing habits early in life. Thus, many people would become less irritating to us and their behavior be interpreted more favorably if we could only

remember that in some respects many of us have not fully grown up.

Pity is a form of love. It is a limited favorable attitude or feeling that makes concession for that which is displeasing due to the recognition of some weakness or failure on the part of the person involved. In fact, this is just a few steps removed from the love that we have for others. We should be mindful of the fact that the objects of our love are never perfect, especially when they are human beings. There is practically always something that we must overlook in those whom we love. In fact, love results in those cases where the satisfactions received considerably dominate those factors which give rise to dissatisfactions. Of course, when our favorable personal feeling toward one has developed, that very attitude tends to minimize the dissatisfaction or to "cover a multitude of sins." In this, the one great influence giving rise to satisfaction that should dominate a Christian in his association with all such people is that which is provided him through his love for God. Hence, the same principle applies that applies to our love for men generally. The greater our love for God, the greater will be our love for man and the easier it will be for us to love that class of men which is considered most unlovable—our enemies. We should never lose sight of the fact that when we do good to our enemies we are doing that which pleases our Father in heaven. The consciousness of this should help us to do good not as a matter of form merely but because of the joy or doing that which pleases him whom we love so much. If we truly love God, there is a real feeling

of satisfaction that goes with that relationship and we can become big enough to overlook the unpleasant acts or attitudes toward us and show our compassion as Jesus did.

If you want to love your enemies or to be able to love them more, then learn to love God more. If you want to love men more, learn to love God more. If you want to love the brethren more, then learn to love God more. If you want to love God more, learn to know him better—of all beings, he is the most lovable. Study God's word earnestly and prayerfully; deal with its teaching intelligently and realistically; think of God's goodness and loving-kindness frequently and thankfully; serve God joyfully and enthusiastically and you will learn to love him more and to love man more—both your brethren and your enemies.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 10

1. State one very important exception in the parallel between the physical begetting and the spiritual begetting.
2. What teaching from Romans and Philippians supports this point of difference?
3. How only can a man be changed?
4. What special provision did God make to keep love alive and active?
5. What do I remember when I remember my father?
6. What do I remember when I remember my Lord and what effect does it have upon me?
7. Had I promised to keep my father's last request what would such add to my memory of him and what effect would it have upon me?
8. What similar promise did I make to Jesus when I accepted him as Lord and what effect will it have upon me to remember this?

9. Then what should it mean to you and to me to partake of the Lord's supper truly in remembrance of him?
10. What is suggested by this evident purpose in partaking of the Lord's supper?
11. What is our first answer to the question, "How can we learn to love man more?"
12. What is man's service to God and how is it rendered?
13. Explain how loving God more will cause us to love man more.
14. Is the one who does us wrong always considered our enemy?
15. Remembering what fact relative to those who injure us would help our attitude toward them?
16. Show that love for enemies is only a little removed from the love we have for those not considered our enemies.

## LESSON 11

### YOU MUST BELIEVE

With this topic we enter a field of greater religious disagreement. This should suggest that it will be more difficult in some parts of the study to be fair and honest. It will demand greater care on the part of the writer to avoid bias in selection and presentation of the truth and will demand a thorough presentation of details that the reader who has a sincere desire to know how to inherit eternal life may be able to weigh the matter for himself and arrive at a safe conclusion. It should also suggest to you, the reader, that in some parts it may be easy for you to misunderstand what is said and that it may require upon your part a prayerful, earnest effort in order to understand the teaching that is presented. I am confident, however, that if you and I will be completely honest in our study of the word of God, we can come to a correct understanding of its teaching. When we are dealing with the word of God, whether teaching or learning, we should always remember that it demands the very best that we can do, for our own soul's salvation is at stake.

There seems to be no subject about which the Bible has told so much that is abused and mistreated so widely and so continuously as the subject of faith. It seems sometimes that special efforts have been made to make it appear to be something supernatural or mysterious. The

Bible teaching on the subject has been so enshrouded in mystery and mysticism and God's revealed teaching has become so buried in the debris of misguided human thinking that it has become no revelation at all. Hence, the people have been so blinded to its simplicity that instead of its shedding forth the light of life for them, they have been blinded and repelled by the mantle of unreality in which it has been cloaked. There is little doubt that the misunderstanding of the Bible teaching on faith has resulted in failure to comprehend its teaching on many other subjects and has become the basis for much of the division in the religious world today. In view of these conditions it shall be our purpose to make a careful study of the subject. If we are willing to accept what the Bible teaching reveals, we should be able to come to a full understanding of it for there is no subject upon which the Bible is more explicit than upon the subject of faith.

You will note that the word believe has been used in the caption of this lesson and the word faith has been used in the above paragraph. The two words are talking about exactly the same thing. The word believe is the verb form and the word faith is the commonly used noun form. In some translations, and in our conversations, the word belief is sometimes used instead of the word faith. It is an incorrect statement to say that we believe in order that we may have faith, for when we say we believe we are saying that we have faith. Or when we say we have faith it is simply another form of saying we believe. Our

caption above, "You must believe," simply means you must have faith in order to inherit eternal life.

So far as I know, all people who propose to accept the Christian religion would subscribe to the fact briefly stated in the caption of this lesson. They all agree that one must believe in order to inherit eternal life or that one must have faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Notwithstanding this agreement, disparity of emphasis has resulted in two doctrines that differ widely in their theoretical statement at least. The difference appears to be much greater theoretically than it is practically. Unfortunately the public impression of the two doctrines has not been obtained or derived from carefully made, well balanced statements coming from the adherents of the respective views. Instead, it has resulted from a medley of phrases many of them elliptical in character and many of them having their origin among adherents of the opposite view being somewhat distorted either by ignorance or by religious prejudice. Another unfortunate factor in the religious situation is the fact that the majority of people become associated with those who hold one of these doctrines on faith before they have had opportunity to acquire an understanding or even a reasonable acquaintance with the other and, in fact, too frequently without an understanding of the one held by the group of people with whom they become religiously associated.

These two doctrines as they are often cryptically expressed are in direct antithesis to each other. How much the popular identification of the two doctrines has been



influenced by the religious rivalry of the people that hold them is difficult to say. One of the doctrines as commonly stated is that people are saved by "faith only" in which the word faith is accepted to mean mere mental assent. The other doctrine as frequently heard is stated that people are saved "by works" with the idea implied that people earn their salvation or merit it. I have not made these statements about the doctrines because they are correct but rather because they are incorrect and should be corrected. There are few, if any, of the adherents of the two doctrines that would accept these statements. The first statement seems to have resulted from an effort on the part of those who would emphasize salvation by faith to make it clear that they do not consider the ordinance of baptism or any other ritual necessary to man's salvation. They do not believe that a mere confession of the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God makes it unnecessary for people to live honorably and uprightly. In fact, many of the people who hold to the doctrine, who are conscientious, make more than average effort to observe the moral principles of Christianity and to show a Christ-like spirit. This statement made of the second doctrine would not be accepted by its adherents but reaction against the teaching that baptism is not a part of the gospel plan of salvation has been so strong that their teaching has been dominated by a marked emphasis on "doing," including baptism, that in contrast to the other doctrine it has been characterized as the doctrine of works. From the standpoint of the general public, the whole situation is unfortunate, for by it the major

part of the religion of the Protestant people is misrepresented.

May I repeat what I have said earlier. All of these people believe that faith is necessary to the salvation of the soul of man. The real point of difference is on the question of what is comprehended in the word faith. What is faith? Therefore, this question shall be our major concern in dealing with this subject, but it appears in order just here after depicting the situation as it exists among religious people that we should use the same care on this subject as in the discussion of love to present the Bible teaching on the point. For after all, that is what is truly vital to all concerned. So then, let us consider a number of statements from the Bible which leave no doubt that men must believe if they will inherit eternal life.

This direct statement makes it evident that God's teaching to man includes the teaching that he must believe. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:23).

Without faith people would die in their sins. This Jesus pointed out to the Jews. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). On the other hand, at the house of Cornelius Peter declared, "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Paul in addressing the apostles and elders in Jerusalem

on the question of circumcising the Gentiles indicated that both Jews and Gentiles cleanse their heart by faith. "And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9).

It is clear that we have our relationship in the divine family which is the basis of our inheritance through faith. Jesus pointed to faith as the basis of the right to become children of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). The apostle John pointed to faith as the evidence that one is begotten of God. "Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). Paul gives us the simple straightforward statement of the fact. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). He also says, "But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3:22).

The essential character of faith in our divine family relationship is shown by the fact that faith is pointed out as that which is begotten of God and that which is effective in the victory of overcoming the world. "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcome the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:4-5).

Faith is that which makes one able to stand before God and the lack of it is pointed out as the reason for the Jews failing to stand. "Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee" (Rom. 11:20-21). Peter expresses the matter somewhat differently in pointing out that God has begotten us unto an incorruptible inheritance and by his power will guard us unto eternal salvation through faith. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:3-5). Hence, we see that faith is not only that which brings one into that relationship with God which is vital to the inheritance but that it is through faith he is kept or guarded until the time that he receives that inheritance.

Faith is shown to be essential to life. This Jesus declared unto Martha, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Paul wrote to the people at Rome and also to the churches at Galatia quoting one of the prophets to show the important relationship between faith and life, "But the righteous shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). "Now that no

man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, "The righteous shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11).

Justification is by faith. This Paul proclaims to the people of Antioch in Pisidia in contrast to the failure of the law of Moses. "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39). He also writes the same things to the people at Rome. "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28). He declared this to be of universal application to both Jews and Gentiles. "If so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith" (Rom. 3:30). "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

We are also told that we have righteousness through faith or that our faith is reckoned to us for righteousness. "Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction" (Rom. 3:22). "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). Paul also points out the same was true with Abraham and that we have a record of the fact because it shall be true with us. "Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom

it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:22-24). Paul also tells us that it is the righteousness through faith in Christ that he rejoices in. "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death" (Phil. 3:8-10).

It is by faith that we have access to the grace of God. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2). This certainly implies the negative. Since we have our access or our opportunity to come to the grace of God through faith, without faith we have no such opportunity.

The great need of faith is shown even more emphatically by the statements from God's word that should leave no doubt with anyone that people are saved through faith. This was certainly emphatically implied in the quotation in the preceding paragraph but here we have the direct statement of fact. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory"

(Eph. 2:8-9). Man, if saved at all, is to be saved through faith. This has been true from the beginning. It will always be true and anyone who gives any recognition to Bible teaching must accept it as true. Everyone who accepts the responsibility of teaching people how to inherit eternal life should be careful that his emphasis on any part of God's teaching should become so exaggerated as to in anywise leave the impression that man is not saved by faith. The following statements are quoted not because the people of the religious world do not accept this teaching, at least theoretically, but for emphasis upon this important Bible teaching for one and all. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (I Tim. 4:10). "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39). "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15). This statement to Timothy indicates the effectiveness of the Old Testament scriptures. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts

16:31). This is the instruction given by Paul to a Roman, or a gentile, who evidently knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ but whose respect for Paul as a teacher had been established through his experience of the night. He had observed, no doubt, Paul's devotion to God, had been shocked by the terrible earthquake and had been saved from death at his own hand by the kindness of Paul. This is the instruction given to the Philippian jailor, the only man from whom is recorded the exact question, "What must I do to be saved?" and I am persuaded that Paul gave him the basic, fundamental, and in one sense the comprehensive answer to his question if we only understood what he said. This shall be the purpose of our future study.

Since our emphasis here is upon the Bible teaching that people are saved by faith, I am taking the privilege to digress slightly to warn against an error that might be made in the interpretation of this verse. Under no circumstances should one conclude from this statement that Paul was telling this man that his faith would not only save him but would save his house without any faith upon the part of the members of his household. If this were true the whole emphasis that has been given to the fact that people are saved by faith is incorrect and misleading. Certainly the statements that have been quoted are too personal in character for a thoughtful person to conceive of any idea other than that of a personal faith, that one is saved by his own faith.

The following statements continue the same emphasis expressed in terms of eternal life which should impress



the comprehensive character of the salvation which is by faith. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). "But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31). "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life" (I Tim. 1:16). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life" (John 6:47). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6).

Surely these statements are sufficient to make it clear to anyone who is interested that man is saved by faith. But it appears in order to call attention to a few negative statements for the purpose of impressing the person who does not believe in Jesus as the Christ with the fact that he is not only unsaved but in his present condition he stands judged or condemned. "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John 3:18-19). Note that the judgment is that such a person loves darkness rather than light. If he continues in this, however, he shall be eternally condemned. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

The question is sometimes asked, "Why is it a sin not to believe in Jesus as the Christ, or what is there so terrible about that to justify the condemnation of God?" Here we have the answer to that question. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son" (I John 5:10). "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the anti-christ, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Fa-

ther: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also” (I John 2:22-23). Thus when one testifies, if we believe it, we give him a place of honor. If we disbelieve it, we give him a place of dishonor for we have made him a liar. Furthermore, if he is true, in reality we are the liars. God has testified, has borne witness, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. Every man who hears this witness and does not believe it makes God a liar and becomes a liar himself. In this we see the significance of one’s believing or not believing. What can one do that will show more disrespect for God than his refusal to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God?

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 11

1. Why is this a more difficult topic than “love” to deal with?
2. What seems to have made the subject of faith more difficult to understand?
3. Define or relate believe, belief, and faith.
4. Upon what do all agree about faith and why the radically opposing doctrines?
5. What has given an exaggerated impression of the difference between the opposing doctrines?
6. State the doctrines in their extreme forms and meaning.
7. What seems to indicate that many who hold the doctrine of “faith only” do not accept the extreme form?
8. What is the real point of difference between these two doctrines on faith?
9. Quote statements that show that people are commanded to believe.
10. List the various things that result from faith.
11. What about faith should not be concluded from the case of the Philippian jailor?
12. What will happen to those who do not believe?
13. Why is it such a great sin not to believe?

## LESSON 12

### WHY IS FAITH NECESSARY?

Regardless of whether you agree with all of the statements that have been made in the preceding lesson or not, certainly the quotations from the Bible establish beyond doubt the fact that you must believe or have faith in order to inherit eternal life. This having been accomplished, we are now ready for the question why must one believe or why is faith necessary?

If this question were asked a large number of religious people a wide variety of answers would be received. There would be many who would have no answer, and even some would probably consider the question sacrilegious. This confusion over such a simple question is due in part to a lack of acquaintance with Bible teaching, but in the main it is likely because the subject of faith has been cloaked with mystery and mysticism. It is indeed strange that many of our common words that are simple, clear and easily understood in our daily conversation are given an unusual, profound and mysterious meaning when they become the language of religion. This seems to be the case with the word faith. Instead of retaining the meaning that it has acquired in regular usage, some mysterious power seems to have been attributed to it. Thus, instead of our words giving us a clear understanding of our religion, our preconceived religious concepts

have mystified our words, beclouded our language and confused our thinking.

It is easy to see how strongly religiously minded, but Biblically unlearned people would be led to attribute some mysterious or mystical power to faith itself. Even some of the Biblical statements quoted in the preceding lesson in regard to faith are sufficient to incline their thinking in that direction. When people are taught that we receive remission of sins by faith, that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, that we are sons of God through faith, that we overcome the world by faith, that we are guarded through faith unto salvation, that the righteous live by faith, that men are justified by faith, that faith is reckoned unto us for righteousness, that we are saved by faith, and that we have eternal inheritance through faith, it is not surprising that humbleminded people have sought to exalt faith to the realm of the supernatural. When we add to these ideas the great list of things recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews that the great men of Bible days accomplished by faith, Jesus' statement to the apostles about one with faith as a grain of mustard seed being able to remove mountains, the repeated use that Jesus made of the declaration, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" to the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. 9:22), to Bartimaeus, the blind beggar (Mark 10:52), to one of the ten lepers healed near a Samaritan village (Luke 17:19), and Jesus' statement to Mary who washed his feet with her tears at the house of Simon, "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50), it is indeed difficult to control

the tendency of glorification and arrive at a realistic concept of faith.

It is abundantly true that many great things have been accomplished by faith and that many others will be accomplished by faith. However, this does not mean that faith itself is the power by which they are accomplished. Faith is man's contact with God; God provides the power. May I attempt to illustrate this point even though I recognize the defectiveness and incompleteness of earthly things in their portrayal of heavenly things. After allowing for such deficiency, I trust that an illustration will be helpful to our understanding. Probably the greatest source of power today with which all are acquainted is the great hydro-electric power plant which provides millions of kilowatts of power to operate all sorts of electric devices over a large section of country. However, there is one thing that is absolutely imperative to the operation of every electric mechanism: it must have a contact with the power house. This connection or contact is not the power. The power is provided in the power house but without a contact no power can reach the mechanism. The case is similar between us and God. Not that God's power is in any sense electrical in nature but in the fact that he is the source of the power and our faith is our means of contact with God. Neither does it imply that God's power is a sort of force mysterious or otherwise that emanates directly from him nor that our contact is some kind of supernatural or spiritualistic medium. This illustration in no way suggests that we are helplessly mechanical in nature or that our contact in

any sense partakes of that character. These matters will be considered later. It merely points up the fact that since the power is from God and faith is our means of contact with God, it is imperative that we believe or else the benefit of God's power will never be ours.

Paul points out to us both the power and our contact with the power in the following statement. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). This statement makes it clear that the power is not in man; that the power is not in man's faith; that the power is not in the gospel; that the power is God's power; that the contact between man and the power is faith. Consequently he that is without faith is without the power. The power does not come into his heart, into his life, influence him to be a new creature unless he believes. Even if you believe that the power operates in some miraculous way through the Holy Spirit our contact would still be faith for the Spirit was never given to anyone but a believer. In writing to the people of Thessalonica in regard to their receiving the gospel which he had preached to them, Paul states the same truth. "And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13). The word of God worked in the Thessalonians that believed it. The power of the gospel was manifest in their lives. The same teach-

ing is found in the Hebrew letter. In explaining the failure of the people of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses the writer stated, "For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. 4:2). From this statement it is obvious that their failure was not due to a lack of God's power; that it was not due to the fact that good tidings were not preached unto them; it was not due to a lack of power on their part. It was due to a lack of faith. The word of God was not "united by faith" to them that heard, therefore, it had no power over them. They continued to ignore God and to walk in their own ways and walked into their own destruction.

We need more and more to recognize that the power is from God; that the power is in the gospel; that the power will work in those who believe the gospel. Paul recognized this in his own work. In speaking of himself and Apollos he said, "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Cor. 3:5-7). He was careful to point it out to the Philippians when he urged them, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and added, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). A recognition of the fact that the power is from God through the gospel should certainly give greater meaning to James'



admonition, "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21), and also to Paul's statement to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Hoping that it has been made clear that faith is not the power that saves one but the contact between man and God which makes the power effective, we now return to a direct discussion of the question, "Why is faith necessary?" The answers most commonly given to this question have been, "For without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God," or "You must believe in order to be saved." Either or both of these statements imply and encourage a very erroneous concept of God and of his teaching. The implication is that since he is all-powerful and made all things, including man, that without any consideration for man's nature or needs he has arbitrarily made certain demands of him or postulated certain conditions with which he must comply if he is to enjoy the blessings of God. It represents the creator of intelligent human beings as ignoring the very nature of his master work of creation and disregarding those powers with which he endowed man and those controlling principles which he embedded in man's nature. To conceive of the teaching of our God as consisting of dogmatic demands or commandments given to his intelligent children of creation is wholly inconsistent with the New Testament conception of God as the all-powerful, all-

wise, merciful and loving heavenly Father. The fact that it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God without faith does not explain why faith is needed. It is only a strong statement of the fact that faith is necessary. The remainder of the verse, however, does give the correct answer to our question. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). Here we not only have a statement of two reasons why faith is necessary but also the two reasons why it is impossible to please God without it. Let us examine these reasons separately.

First, why must a man believe that, "God is" in order to be well-pleasing unto him? Simply because of the very nature which God gave man it is inconceivable to think of an intelligent being worshipping, serving, honoring a god which he does not believe exists. Suppose you were to meet me on the highway and ask me where I was going and I told you that I was going to Chicago, but as we continued our conversation I made the statement to you that I did not believe that there was a city of Chicago. You would probably ask me again where I was going. Then when I answered you would probably put the proposition, "You say you are going to Chicago and you do not believe there is a Chicago?" That would certainly be a strange state of affairs. In fact, it would be so inconsistent with human behavior that you would probably cease to be interested in the question of where I was going and become more concerned about my mental condition. It would be evident that I needed to go to a

hospital for the mentally deranged for examination. Why? Because it is not reasonable for a person to be going to a place which he does not believe exists for no human being in possession of normal mental powers will act with any such inconsistency. Suppose, again, you were to find a man bowed down in earnest prayer to God, earnestly pouring out his very soul, but when he had finished he told you that he did not believe there was a God. If he fully convinced you that he did not believe there was a God, yet he prayed to God, you would be forced to the conclusion that he was mentally abnormal. It is necessary for man to believe that, "God is" before his nature, which God gave him in the beginning, will allow him to worship or serve God.

Paul presents the same idea when he declares, "For, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and then asks the question, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:13-14). Yes, it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God without faith for without faith man has no contact with God. So far as his personal attitude is concerned, God is nonexistent and so far as his calling upon the name of the Lord in sincerity, it is simply inconceivable and would only happen in a case of desperation such as that of the widely known infidel, Robert Ingersoll. It is reported that Mr. Ingersoll, who all of his life propagated the idea that there is no God, when he was faced with the reality of death gave expression to this prayer, "Oh, God, if there be a God, have mercy upon my soul, if I have a soul." Certainly there could be little that was

pleasing to God in such a prayer, or little to honor God in such a life—a life that through the years had rejected God's testimony and made him a liar.

Let us now consider the second reason why faith is necessary. The latter part of Hebrews 11:6 states that he must believe that, "He is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Why must man believe that God is a rewarder of them that seek after him in order to please God? The answer is simple. Man would not serve God without the expectation of a reward. This is the most fundamental principle of human action. Because people have considered it selfish they have tried to reject it or explain it away but it stands nevertheless. God embedded the principle in human nature when he made man and in his wisdom he has made it the basic principle in his plan to save man. When it is stated that man works for a reward, we should not narrowly conclude that man only works for money or some other material possession. Man works for praise; he works for honor; he works for the satisfaction of pleasing those whom he loves; he works for those whom he enjoys seeing benefit from the fruit of his work, but when man works, regardless of what the activity is, we may always be sure that he receives some kind of a reward. The farmer plants his crops because he expects a harvest. The business man engages in a trade because he expects a profit. The financier invests in stocks or bonds because he expects a dividend. The physician pursues his practice because of the joy of service or because he expects an income and the praise of his fellows. The teacher teaches his classes for the salary

that is made and the satisfaction that he receives from his work. The preacher preaches his sermons because of some reward, whether financial or otherwise. There may be a number of subjective rewards in many or all of these cases but they are rewards nevertheless. Man does not regularly, systematically and energetically pursue any activity unless there is some kind of reward attached thereto. God made man that way and in dealing with him he knows that this basic principle of action must be complied with if satisfactory results are to be obtained.

Lest some should think that the ideas presented are only the product of human reasoning or that such a principle is not responsible for those nobler actions in which men have engaged to please God, we shall turn to the New Testament for further illustrations. We are told that, "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Heb. 11: 24-26). This is an account of one of the noblest decisions ever to be made by mortal man. Moses, who later became the great law-giver and leader of the people of Israel, made a choice which changed the whole course of his life. Why did he leave Pharaoh's house? Why did he choose to share the ill treatment of the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures that were his to enjoy in the royal house of Egypt? Why would he exchange pleasure for ill treatment? The answer is given

simply but plainly, "For he looked unto the recompense of reward." He accounted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." He worked for the greater reward. This has always been true and always will be true. Man works for a reward whether it be in his earthly affairs or in his religious life. When people come to account the reproach of Christ greater riches than the pleasures of sin, they will follow Moses' example. Sometimes we hear a person say that sin has nothing to offer a man. In comparison to what God offers, this is true but in terms of human evaluation, it is false. When sin ceases to offer something that man wants, he will cease to give his life to such.

We are told that, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10). Here we find that the great man of faith, the friend of God, the father of the faithful obeyed God's teaching to go out of his land and became a wanderer and a tent-dweller, "For he looked for the city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God." In brief, he looked for a reward. He was a human being and like all others he followed the principle of human nature with which God had endowed him.

Even Jesus himself worked for a reward. "Therefore

let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2). Why did Jesus leave his place in glory, empty himself, take the form of a servant and endure the cross? It was "for the joy that was set before him." His reward was the joy of helping others, the joy of saving man from his wickedness and the destruction toward which he was going. It is evident that working for a reward is not necessarily selfish but it is natural. Whether or not it is selfish depends upon the kind of reward for which one works. It may be money to be spent in satisfying one's own lusts, or it may be the joy of doing good to others, or the satisfaction of a consciousness that we are honoring God. We may not always know whether one's reward is selfish or unselfish but we can always know that he is working for a reward.

The same principle was operative among the apostles and early Christians. This is indicated by the following statements from Paul. "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (I Tim. 4:10). "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake

it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking" (I Cor. 9:9-10).

Then why must a man have faith in God in order to please him or why is it impossible to please God without faith? Our answer is because man must believe that God is, and he must believe that he is a rewarder of them who seek after him or his very nature with which God has endowed him makes it impossible for him to do those things that please God. Thus, we see that man's need for faith is not because of some mysterious power that is inherent in faith itself; it is not merely to comply with a commandment of God; it is not simply to meet an arbitrary demand; it is necessary to bring man in contact with God. In fact, without faith man is without any consciousness of God's existence, without any knowledge of God's love and without any foundation of hope that would give meaning to God's promises.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 12

1. What are the most common answers to the question, "Why is faith necessary?"
2. What erroneous concept of God and his teaching is implied in these answers?
3. Instead of showing why faith is necessary what is shown by the statement, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God"?
4. State the Bible answer to the question.
5. Why must man believe that "God is"? Illustrate.
6. How does Paul present the same idea in the Roman letter?
7. Whose final prayer suggests the impossibility of pleasing God without faith?



8. Why is it necessary that man believe that "He is a rewarder of them that seek after him"? Illustrate.
9. Why did Moses' faith cause him to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?
10. On what condition will people follow Moses' example today and forsake sin?
11. Why did Abraham leave his people and become a sojourner in Canaan?
12. What was Jesus' reward that led him to suffer for man?
13. Give statements from Paul's teaching that show the same principle.
14. Why is it impossible to be well-pleasing to God without faith?

## LESSON 13

### WHAT IS FAITH?

It is hoped that the preceding discussion has prepared the way for this one and that the answer to this question can be made so plain that the cloak of mystery and mysticism which has so frequently veiled this subject in the past may be completely removed. This we ought to be able to accomplish for all who respect the Bible teaching since the New Testament gives us a description of faith in one direct simple sentence. This is the only description of faith in the whole Bible. This not only means that there is no other statement that might give rise to a contradictory or conflicting idea but it also makes the interpretation of this statement the more important and demands that it be given a most careful examination. Here it is. "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is the description of the faith of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samuel, David and all others who were pleasing to God. The faith of these godly people is described by two terms—"assurance" and "conviction." Let us first observe that the writer does not say that faith produces assurance, or causes a conviction but that faith is assurance and is a conviction. This being true there is no ground for thinking of faith as a mysterious power, something that

cannot be understood for we know the meaning of "assurance" and "conviction." Webster tells us that assurance means, "State of being assured or sure," and that assured means, "Made sure; insured; sure; indubitable," or "confident." He defines conviction as meaning, "Act of convincing someone; more often, state of being convinced." From this we see that each of these terms describes a mental state or a condition within the individual. Now, since the Bible describes faith as the state of being assured, or the state of being convinced, surely those who accept the Bible can no longer think of faith as a mysterious power. From the statements that have just been made one should recognize the fact that by using the two terms, "assurance" and "conviction," the writer of the Hebrew letter was not speaking of two states or mental attitudes but one. He is simply speaking of the state of being confident or convinced in words that are commonly used in speaking of this as it is applied in the field of promises and of facts respectively. "Assurance of things hoped for" is confidence that things not in hand will be received or possessed under the conditions that pertain. "A conviction of things not seen" is confidence that things which have not been seen exist as represented. Thus, faith in God is assurance or confidence that we will receive the things which he has promised—blessings here, eternal life, etc.—according to his teaching and confidence that God, heaven, hell, etc., exist as stated in his teaching. In other words, faith gives reality to the promises and facts of the Bible that

we may react to the things that are unseen as we do to the things that are seen.

Now with the help of your imagination I want to illustrate or demonstrate to you faith as it is described in the above statements. Since faith is a state within an individual, it cannot be seen except as it expresses itself in the person's behavior. First let us consider it as, "a conviction of things not seen." Please think of yourself as one of a group of people seated in a classroom and the writer as a speaker standing at a cabinet type speaker's stand before the group. In this setting the demonstration begins. I hold up my hand in which is concealed a small object and ask the question, "What is in my hand?" The answer is given by members of the group, "I do not know." This answer is correct for no one in the group has any information in regard to the object which I hold in my hand. I then state to the group, "I have a watch in my hand." After a moment's pause I repeat my question, "What do I have in my hand?" Those who believe my statement unhesitatingly answer, "A watch." Why did they answer thus, and as a member of the group if you joined in the answer, why did you do so? It was because you believed what I said, and believing you had the conviction that the thing not seen, the watch, was there. You had faith or confidence, and your statement bore witness to the fact.

Next, I shall demonstrate faith, as "Assurance of things hoped for." As I stand before the group of which you are a member, I begin asking different members of the group

about articles that they would like to have that they do not at present possess. I learn from the conversation that you are very much interested in good books. Then I very graphically describe a book that I consider very valuable that you have had no opportunity to examine. You become very much interested in it and ask where a copy can be obtained. Upon learning of your strong desire for the book, I tell you that I have a lovely copy of the book in the speaker's stand that I am going to give to somebody and if you will come to the speaker's stand immediately I shall be very glad to give it to you. Whereupon you arise from your seat and come to the speaker's stand. I take the book from the stand and give it to you. You thank me kindly and return to your place very much elated over the gift. Now I ask you, "Why did you come to the speaker's stand?" If you give a complete answer, whether you use these words or not your meaning will be, "I believed what you said about the book and I wanted a copy of it; I believed that you had a copy in the speaker's stand; and I believed that you would give it to me." Or putting the matter another way, you wanted the book so when you believed my promise made upon conditions wholly within your power, your faith was "assurance" of the thing hoped for, the book, so you came to the speaker's stand for it.

Here we see faith as it is to be found in the common behavior of people, everyday people, in the everyday activities of life. We see also that it is the same as that

which is described in the Hebrew letter. Furthermore, we see that faith is not some sort of mysterious power, but rather the basic means of the control of human behavior which God imbedded in our nature in the beginning. It is the natural product of human understanding and the means through which powers or influences external to man become effective in producing, sustaining, or changing his activity. Through the intelligence which God gave him, man may hear and learn and understand. When dealing with things present, the result is called knowledge. When it concerns things not present, the product is faith.

Now let us examine this illustration a little more carefully to learn, if possible, the source of the power that resulted in your securing the book. Did you go for the book because you believed you could get it? Was that the prime moving power behind your activity? Certainly not. Your believing that the book was there and that the book would be given to you would never have caused you to go for it if you had not wanted it. The thing that caused you to get the book, the influence that caused you to commit the act, must have been that which caused you to want it. Then why did you want it? Was it not because you considered it of value to you? Either the information it contained would be of personal value to you or that the reading of it would bring you great enjoyment. Then the great value of the book and what it would mean to you is the cause for your wanting it and consequently the real power that lead to your securing it. But how did this power come to influence you when you

had not seen the book? What was your connection with the power, the personal value of the book, that caused it to influence you as it did? It was your faith in the greatness of the book as I described it to you. It was the realistic conviction that the book was great and that its personal value to you was great.

Now putting the whole story together in regular order, the picture is this. The power lay in the greatness of the book. The connection that gave the power a vital working influence in you was your faith, or your conviction, that it was of great personal value to you through the message that I had given. Then having that cause to want the book and believing or being assured of a way to get it, you followed the instruction given.

Now that we have before us a picture of faith as it functions in the daily activities of man, we shall observe that God has given it the same place in the activities of Christianity. In the story of the man who truly believes the gospel and seeks eternal life, we have an exact parallel of the story that we have just analyzed so far as the function of faith is concerned. The Bible tells us that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), and nowhere does the Bible point to anything else or any other agency as the power of God unto salvation. By the statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, we understand that the gospel is the agency through which God proposes to save man. Since this power only becomes effective to those who believe the gospel, it is evident that man's salvation is dependent in some way

upon his active participation in the matter. Furthermore, since the power of the gospel is only to those who believe, it is evident that one's faith is not the power but through his faith he makes contact with the power. Then wherein lies the power of the gospel? Paul answers this question thus, "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). What does Paul say makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation? Wherein lies the power? Its power lies in that which it revealed. It is the power of God unto salvation by virtue of its revelation of a righteousness of God from faith unto faith. Much has been said by Bible scholars in an effort to give an exact description of the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel. Because of the derivational meaning of the word righteousness, some have been scrupulously technical in their interpretation. All of the great attributes of God such as goodness, benevolence, compassion, etc., have been excluded because righteousness means justice and justice would not include such. It is natural that Paul would have used such a phrase under the circumstances. In writing to a people whose only claim for justification before God was the righteousness of the law, it is reasonable for Paul to speak of the teaching upon which he had based his hope as revealing "a righteousness of God from faith unto faith" or a righteousness of faith in contrast to the righteousness of the law. This should not necessarily mean that everything beyond the level of justice was excluded. The very nature of the gospel and what it reveals forbid



such. The very essence of the gospel as Paul preached it was that which revealed God's goodness and loving kindness. After reminding the Corinthians that he had preached to them the gospel, Paul describes it thus. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15: 3-4). This brief statement of the gospel not only reveals the righteousness of God in providing the sacrifice for sins but also the love of God and the love of Christ. Paul gives the same emphasis by the terms he used in speaking about the gospel in the same letter. "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). Here he describes it as "the word of the cross." Later he refers to it as "Christ crucified." "Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:22-24). Paul also said, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). This indicates that man's trouble is due to the fact that he knew not God and definitely implies that the gospel was preached to reveal God to him. This is further supported by a statement that Jesus made in his prayer to the Father, "And this is life eternal, that

they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). From these statements, it is apparent that the gospel not only reveals the justice of God, but the wisdom and the goodness of God. In fact, it reveals God.

Now let us summarize this in the form used in portraying the faith in man's behavior relative to the material things of life. The real power of God resides in his greatness, and his goodness, and his love, manifested in the great things which he has prepared for man, and the crucifixion of Christ to provide man a way of life. These things are revealed to man through the gospel and become realities in his thinking through faith. Through the conviction that these things are true and the assurance that the promises of the gospel have been brought within his reach, his heart is turned to honor God and so long as this revelation holds a vital place in his thinking, in humility and gratitude to God, he will seek to live as a child of God ought to live.

We have examined the Bible description of faith and have illustrated it in the field of human achievements and also in the field of religion. We have found that it does not operate through some mysterious influence but rather through one of God's physical laws—through the basic law of human action that God established as a part of man's nature when he created man.

Let us consider further the operation of this plan as shown in the teaching of Jesus himself. He did not discuss it analytically but gave parables to show that the law which operates to lead people to seek the kingdom

of God is the same as that which has caused man to seek other things in life. These are the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price. We shall examine the former in some detail. It is stated as follows: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).

This is one of a series of parables in which Jesus was teaching people about the kingdom of heaven. This was a method of teaching about the unknown by comparing it with something with which people are well acquainted. Thus it is evident from the fact that Jesus made such a comparison that the people were acquainted with occasions when men had found treasures hidden in the field. Jesus gave no explanation for treasures being so hidden. There was no need for such because the people to whom he spoke were acquainted with the customs and conditions of that day. We are told from other sources that due to the prevalence of thieves and robbers and the lack of any other place of safety the rich people of that country resorted to the practice of burying part of their wealth as a means of safety. However, they were frequently driven from their homes suddenly by invading armies or suddenly carried away by marauding parties and left their treasures to be found by others where they had been hidden in the field.

In teaching his lesson about the kingdom of heaven, Jesus is not merely comparing it with a treasure. He is not comparing it with some treasure that is hidden. He

is not comparing it with just any treasure that is hidden in the field. But rather, he is comparing it with this treasure hidden in the field that was found. So in order to comprehend his lesson we must consider the story of this particular treasure. Then let us analyze the story and get the lesson of the parable.

Jesus does not give us a definite evaluation of this particular treasure. He does not tell us what it is. He simply calls it a treasure but does inform us that it was hidden in the field. He gives no indication of how it was hidden; whether it was wrapped in a goat hide, buried in some sort of chest or just covered with soil. He gives no indication of how the treasure was found; whether it had been partly uncovered by the wind and the rain and was discovered by the man as he walked through the field or was uncovered while the man was digging in the field. He tells us simply that it was found. The two facts thus far that are necessary to Jesus' comparison in teaching his lesson are these: A treasure was hidden in the field, and, a man found it. Next we are told that the man hid the treasure without being given the reason for doing so. Then the man went and sold what he had and bought the field. This he did gladly.

Here we have one of the greatest action stories that has ever been written. Jesus has told us only that which meets the eye. The part of the story most vital to Jesus' lesson is not expressed in words. It must be read between the lines. But it is so naturally and normally a part of the story that no thoughtful person would fail to see it. While the value of this treasure is not expressed in terms

of money, it is indirectly given in the more real and vital measure of human wants. The man who found it appraised it as being so precious unto himself that he wanted it more than all that he possessed and so unreservedly that he went and sold all that he had in order to secure it.

Jesus was not necessarily indorsing the method which the man used to secure the field. However, it is likely that such a practice was customary in that country at that time. The point in the method that is important to the emphasis of Jesus' lesson is evidently that the man used the surest way that he knew to secure the treasure. Furthermore, had the owner of the field known that the treasure was there and sold it for the price offered, it would have reflected upon the value of the treasure or upon the judgment of the man who found it and consequently the incident would have been inappropriate for the teaching of Jesus' lesson.

Now by a series of questions let us delineate that which is easily read between the lines of the story. Why did this man sell all that he had and buy this field? He did it because he wanted the treasure that he knew to be hidden there. Why did he want this treasure? Because he was convinced of its great value to him. What indicates that he believed it to be worth much more than all that he had? He joyfully sold all that he possessed and bought the field.

This story is another portrayal of the law of human action. The power that became effective and resulted in securing the treasure was its greatness and precious-

ness. The man's conviction or confidence in its greatness gave it reality with him and made him want it. Conditions that pertained to the situation gave him assurance that he could get it. This he did.

What is the lesson that Jesus is teaching by this story? In what way is the kingdom of heaven like this treasure that this man found hidden in the field? Surely Jesus did not mean to teach that it was like it physically for he gave not one detail of physical description. His lesson evidently was not to be drawn from the fact that the treasure was hidden for it was also found. Since the story portrays only one thing in regard to the treasure that was found hidden in the field, this certainly must be the point of similarity between it and the kingdom of heaven. When it was found, it was sufficiently attractive that the man wanted it. It was considered so precious that he was willing to give all that he had to obtain it. And so it is with the kingdom of heaven. By the use of a story that is the very embodiment of the law of human action, Jesus portrays the greatness of the kingdom of heaven and by doing so not only indicates the power that it will exert in the lives of those that find it but demonstrates the fact that the same law operates to control man's activities in spiritual things as in material things. And since he assigned no definite value either to the man's possession or to the treasure, he implied that the greatness of the kingdom of heaven is sufficient to exercise such an influence over man regardless of his possessions if his faith or conviction gives the value reality.

Someone may question the propriety of offering this

as a parallel to our former illustration suggesting that this man knew the treasure to be more valuable than all that he had and was acting upon judgment and not upon faith. It is true that this man's action was based upon his judgment but at what point did his judgment produce action? Was it not at the point when, through examination of the treasure, he was convinced that it was worth more than all that he had. According to Webster, "conviction" is the state of being convinced, and "assurance" is the state of being assured or confident. According to our earlier description of faith, it is a "conviction," an "assurance." Hence, whether action is produced through knowledge or through faith, it is the result of the same mental state—assurance or conviction. Of this Jesus leaves no doubt in that he compares the great moving power of the kingdom of heaven, which can only be found or known through faith, to the moving power of this treasure hidden in the field which could be found and known through man's senses. When man has a faith like that which was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, being fully assured that God is faithful and that all that he has revealed about the kingdom of heaven is true, he, like the man who found the treasure hidden in the field, will joyfully give up all that he has to the service of God. In this we see the great power of the gospel to those who believe it.

And further, we can understand why a man must be saved by faith, for the man who, through faith, finds the kingdom of heaven as it is portrayed in the gospel will want it above everything else he has ever known and

that same element in his nature that has led him to seek good business propositions, that has led him to work for other things he wanted will lead him to seek the kingdom of God and will cause him to make a wholehearted effort to obtain it. It will be so great and so good that he will be willing to give up all else that he may enter into life. All that is necessary to start a normal human being toward the kingdom of God is faith in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom. Just as surely as we tap this source of energy, we get action—serious, sober, enthusiastic action. Probably the major difficulty in the religious world today is a lack of real faith in God's word. Probably the greatest lack in the lives of individuals who call themselves Christians is the lack of faith. Probably the greatest mistake that is being made by the leaders and teachers in religion today is their inclination to assume that people believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that people believe the Bible, and the task that remains is that of getting faith translated into action. This is an unsound assumption. The fundamental reason why we are failing to get action is the weakness of our faith. It is the same in religion as in business affairs. So long as our faith is weak in a certain business proposition, we get little or no action; but when faith is genuine, a real conviction and assurance of that which we want, business begins.

I hope and pray that what I have said in this discussion may lead you to understand and accept this simple Bible description of faith. "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). If you accept this Bible statement of the matter, since



this is the only Bible description of faith, surely as an honest, intelligent human being, you can no longer think of faith as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end. Certainly if you believe this Bible teaching, you can no longer conceive of faith as being, or exerting, some mysterious or mystical power in the life of man. Instead you will recognize it as a state or condition within the individual that has been brought about by hearing or learning the word of God, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17), and that makes the power of the gospel operative in the life of man through God's divine laws that he embedded in man's nature when he made him. It is also my prayer that by a Bible understanding of this subject you may not only remove the shroud of mystery that has obscured your proper perception of faith (if this is the case with you), but that such may bring to life within you the full power of the gospel by revealing to you the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven, and moving you to honor God by seeking to do what he wants you to do in the way he wants you to do it.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 13

1. Give two reasons why one should be able to make the answer to the question, "What is faith?"
2. Quote the Bible description of faith.
3. What are the key words in this description?
4. What are Webster's definitions of these words?
5. Describe each of these words using the word, "Confidence."
6. How was faith as "evidence of things not seen" demonstrated?
7. How was faith as "assurance of things hoped for" demonstrated?

8. Instead of faith being some sort of mysterious power, what is it?
9. Compare faith and knowledge.
10. In the illustration used what was the real power that led to securing the book?
11. Express the story in regular order showing how you got the book.
12. Show that faith is not the power of God unto salvation.
13. Wherein lies the power of the gospel?
14. Why should Paul's use of the word "righteousness" in speaking of what was revealed in the gospel not exclude God's goodness, love, etc.?
15. Relate the story of how the gospel becomes effective.
16. Instead of operating through some mysterious influence, through what does faith operate?
17. In what parables does Jesus show this principle in operation?
18. With what does Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven?
19. What does Jesus not tell us about the treasure?
20. What are the facts that are given?
21. Give the vital part of this story that must be read between the lines.
22. What is the important point in the method used to secure the field?
23. Portray the law of human action in this story by a series of questions and answers.
24. What was the power at work?
25. In what way is the kingdom of heaven like this treasure?
26. Jesus not only portrays the greatness of the kingdom of heaven but demonstrates what fact?
27. Show that whether action is produced by knowledge or through faith, it is the result of the same mental state.
28. How did Jesus show this to be true?
29. From this show why a man must be saved by faith.
30. What only is necessary to start a normal human being toward the kingdom of God?
31. Why are we failing to get action in religion today?
32. If one accepts the Bible description of faith, how can he no longer think of faith?

## LESSON 14

### FAITH RECKONED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

From our examination of the Bible teaching on the subject of faith thus far, the doctrine that man is saved by faith has been unquestionably established as a Bible teaching. Furthermore, it has been shown that faith is not a kind of mysterious power that exerts a supernatural influence upon the individual but is only the means by which one is brought into realistic contact with the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, making its influence effective in his life by establishing its values as personal values. Instead of faith being some mysterious power or influence peculiar to the realm of religion, faith is an operating principle of human nature which God provided man in the beginning and which serves as a positive control upon man's behavior in all fields of human endeavor. Our only Bible description of faith is, "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), a demonstration of which has been carefully described. Now let us further check these findings and establish a more comprehensive concept of faith by examining the record of him whose faith was reckoned for righteousness for we want to employ every possible precaution to insure a correct understanding of faith—the faith that saves; the faith that is reckoned for righteousness.

Abraham is the one man of the whole Bible whose faith is referred to repeatedly as being "reckoned unto him for righteousness." To the Romans, Paul said, "Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:22), and to the Galatians, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gal. 3:6), and James said, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God" (Jas. 2:23). The faith of Abraham, the father of the faithful, was not only used by Paul and James to give the people of their day a correct understanding of that which would be reckoned for righteousness but religious teachers of our day in their lessons on faith appeal to the example of Abraham to support ideas whose meanings are in conflict. Hence, it is necessary that we examine the case of Abraham very carefully.

We shall begin by relating the cardinal points of Abraham's life as given in the Bible record that provide us with a picture of that faith which was "reckoned unto him for righteousness." From the record as given, it appears that Abram (Abraham's name before God changed it) was a native of Ur of the Chaldees. His father's name was Terah and he had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. They all married in Ur of the Chaldees. They were among the descendents of Noah, the preacher of righteousness. From the limited information given in the record relative to the religious status of Abram's family, the picture is not too clear. It appears, however,

that some recognition was given to Jehovah as God and he was probably worshipped but some worship was also rendered to idols. It is evident that God first appeared unto Abram in the Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 15:7), referred to by Stephen as Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2). How God appeared unto him is not known. Whether Abram was an outstanding man of faith in his generation as was the cases of Enoch and Noah, or whether God permitted him to witness unusual demonstrations of his power, we have no record. How Abram came to believe in God we do not know, but the fact that he did believe in God no one would question. Although there is not one word in the record of God's calling Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees about Abram's faith, no one would doubt that he believed in God for surely it was proved by his action. The record states, "Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and by thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). Surely he would never have left the land of his nativity and his kindred and gone out not knowing "whither he went" (Heb. 11:8) without a "conviction of things not seen" and "an assurance of things hoped for." How could Abram leave his home and kindred to go out unless he held the conviction that there was a land to which to go and the

assurance that God would bless him as he had promised. This was the first recorded test of Abram's faith.

How old Abram was when God called him, or how long he had been married, we do not know. We only know that he had been married long enough to warrant the judgment that Sarai, his wife, was barren. "And Sarai was barren; she had no child" (Gen. 11:30). Abram moved first with his father and his nephew, Lot, to Haran where he stayed until Terah died. How long he stayed in Haran we do not know but he was seventy-five years old when he left Haran and went into the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:4). He first encamped at Shechem where God appeared to him and renewed the promise of the land and he built an altar unto Jehovah. He went next to a mountain east of Bethel where he built an altar unto Jehovah. He moved on toward the south, and because of a famine went into the land of Egypt. When he went up out of Egypt, he separated from Lot because of the strife between their herdsmen and later Jehovah appeared unto him and renewed again the promise and Abram dwelt by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron and built there an altar unto Jehovah. Later he raised an army, together with his own trained servants, and rescued Lot from the kings that had raided Sodom. On his return from the battle he met Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God who blessed him and to whom he gave a tenth.

We are told that, "After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision" (Gen. 15:1). In this vision, "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo one born in my house is mine heir" (Gen.

15:3). This statement seems to indicate that Abram's faith in Jehovah had not wavered, but after the passing of approximately ten years Abram had come to the conclusion, as seemed to be customary in those days when a man had no children, that one born in his house would become his seed. "And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:4-6). This is the first reference in the Bible record to Abraham's faith. This happened approximately ten years from the time when Abram left Haran and even longer since God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, when Abram gave up his own expectation that one born in his house would be his seed and without any evidence other than the word of God believed that he would have a child of his own and that his seed would be as numberless as the stars of heaven. This was the second recorded test of Abram's faith.

Shortly after this, accepting God's statement that the seed would be Abram's personally and due to the fact that Sarai had been so long barren, Hagar was given to Abram to wife. In due course of time Ishmael was born.

Approximately fourteen years after the former vision, when Abram was ninety-nine years old and Ishmael was thirteen, God appeared unto Abram again and promising

him that he should be a father of multitudes, changed him name to Abraham (Gen. 17:1-5), and gave him the covenant of circumcision, "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:10-14). He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah and told Abraham that Sarah would have a son and that she would be a mother of nations. After God finished talking with Abraham that very day Abraham, Ishmael and every male that was born in Abraham's house or bought with his money were circumcised (Gen. 17:23-24). This was the third real test of Abraham's faith.

Paul described Abraham's faith at this time as follows: "Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years



old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:18-21). In this case, Abraham not only had no evidence in support of God's promise other than God's word, but every physical evidence was to the contrary. Sarah had been barren all of her life and now it was past the time for child bearing. "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" (Gen. 18:11), but Abraham was, "Fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." After Paul's description, he adds this conclusion, "Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:22). Thus, Abraham's faith was the unwavering assurance of things hoped for.

According to God's promise, in due course of time Isaac was born and after some years had passed, nobody knows exactly how many, came the fourth and final test of Abraham's faith. God instructed him to take Isaac into the land of Moriah and there offer him as a sacrifice upon the altar. This was a double test. Whom would he put first, the God whom he served or Isaac whom he loved? And how would God fulfill his promise if he put to death the seed through whom the promise was to be fulfilled? The writer of the Hebrew letter briefly describes this occasion and Abraham's faith as follows: "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only

begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back" (Heb. 11:17-19). Here again it is evident that Abraham was moved to offer up his promised son to honor God's word because he accounted that God was able to raise him up or because of his assurance that God would fulfill his promise.

God stayed Abraham's hand from killing his son and provided a ram for the offering. After this was offered, the record states, "And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:15-18). Thus closes the record of Abraham's faith—the "faith that was reckoned for righteousness."

What do you get of Abraham's faith from this story? Is it possible to fairly describe this picture with the words, "faith only," or "faith without works"? Can any individual give reasonable consideration to the facts of Abraham's life and declare that he "only believed"? On the other hand, is it possible for one who looks at the picture realistically to fail to recognize that Abraham's life was simply faith in action; that his deeds were the natural

results of an unchanging conviction and an assurance that could not be shaken?

Did you notice that the Bible record of the story of Abraham begins with a command and a promise without one word being said about faith? In fact, in the narrative in the book of Genesis Abraham's faith is never spoken of but once and that was in a descriptive statement made by the narrator and not a statement from God addressed to Abraham. We have no Bible record of any commandment to Abraham to believe. The commandments were always to act. How could Abraham's faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness have been something that was separate and apart from his works, when God apparently never spoke to him in terms of faith but always in terms of action. Is it reasonably conceivable that Abraham would ever have enjoyed the blessings promised by Jehovah had he remained in Ur of the Chaldees?

Did you observe that when God gave Abraham circumcision as the seal of the covenant he said to him, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations" (Gen. 17:9), and added, "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. 17:10), also, "And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14)? Then if Abraham had failed or refused to be circumcised he would have broken God's covenant and consequently

would have been cut off from the people. How could he have received the promises?

Do you recall the fact that on the occasion when Abraham had bound Isaac and placed him upon the altar and stretched forth his hand to slay him as an offering according to the commandment of Jehovah that God repeated his promise to Abraham with an oath and gave his reason in these words, "Because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:17-18)? Would it not be a bit strange for God to swear to Abraham that he would bless him because he had obeyed God when obedience is unnecessary? Do you know that the writer of the Hebrew letter made use of this very occasion to urge diligence on the part of those who had accepted Christ, pointing to Abraham as one of those to be imitated "who through faith and patience inherit the promises"? "And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:11-15). This inspired writer indicates that Abraham received the promise because he endured, not because he "only believed." He received it because his faith that he had in uncircumcision was real and impelled him to obey God while in uncircumcision and also in circumcision. Any man who will point to Abraham's

faith that “was reckoned to him for righteousness” as an example of “faith without works” has surely overlooked part of the record of Abraham’s faith. If there was ever a faith that included obedience, it was Abraham’s faith.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 14

1. Briefly summarize the discussion of faith thus far.
2. By whom and on what occasions has the fact that Abraham’s faith which was reckoned unto him for righteousness been used in the New Testament teaching?
3. What do we know about Abram before he was called?
4. What was the first test of Abram’s faith and how only do we know he believed?
5. Recount the story of Abram’s life between the first and second tests of his faith.
6. Tell of the second test of Abraham’s faith.
7. Describe the third test of Abraham’s faith.
8. How does Paul describe Abraham’s faith at this time?
9. Describe the fourth test of Abraham’s faith.
10. What expressions are inadequate for describing Abraham’s faith as shown by the story of his life?
11. With what does the record of the story of Abraham begin?
12. What sort of commandments were always given to Abraham and what was never commanded.
13. Show that it was necessary for Abraham to be circumcised.
14. What reason did God give Abraham for repeating his promise with an oath?
15. Through what did the writer of Hebrews say Abraham inherited the promises?
16. What further statement is made by this same writer which shows Abraham did not inherit the promises because he “only believed”?

## LESSON 15

# FAITH RECKONED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Continued)

Having considered the story of Abraham's faith as it was given in the record of Genesis, let us examine the use that is made of the case of Abraham by the New Testament writers in explaining the way of righteousness. Paul employs the example of Abraham in writing to the people at Rome and to the churches of Galatia, James uses it in writing to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes some use of it. We shall examine them in this order.

The entire fourth chapter of the Roman letter is given to a discussion of Abraham's faith, of which it will be necessary to consider the major part. Paul begins the chapter with the question, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?" This is followed by the implication that he has not obtained anything by works. "For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God." Then he appeals to the scripture to show that it was by faith. "For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." He follows this with reasoning that applies the teaching to others, "Now to him that worketh,

the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." For final support he quotes David's statement of the principle, "Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." Certainly Paul makes it plain that man is not justified by works but that faith is reckoned to him for righteousness. But in order to understand what this means we must know what works Paul is speaking of and what he means by the word "faith." To be sure if a person holds the idea that one is saved by faith as a mere mental attitude, exclusive of any obedience of God's teaching and reads "his" meaning of faith and works into Paul's statement, he has here indisputable proof of his doctrine. But in so doing, he makes Paul contradict himself and thereby invalidates the evidence he offers. However, if he will let Paul speak for himself by accepting Paul's meaning of faith and works as he used the terms here he will get Paul's teaching in the matter and will find it to be quite different from his own.

The fact is universally accepted by all Bible scholars that the exact meaning of words in a particular statement must be derived from the context. This being true, let us inquire into Paul's broader description, of which this was a part, and consider the particular truth which he purposed to establish or illustrate by the case of Abraham.

It is clear from Paul's discussion in the preceding chapter that he was teaching the people to whom he wrote, who were in danger of putting their trust in the law of Moses, that salvation was not through the law of Moses but through Christ Jesus as he declares, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:20-25). In this quotation Paul spoke of these two teachings in terms of their contrasting characteristics, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," and "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all them that believe." The major point of contrast is between works and faith.

It was absolutely necessary that this point of contrast be made clear and emphatic if these people were ever to understand the nature of the gospel of Christ. The only religion that they had ever known based the hope it offered upon meritorious works. The Gentiles whose former religion had been idolatry had based their hopes upon their ability to appease the anger of their god or to



gain his blessing through their offerings and worship. The Jews had known only the law of Moses and to them it was not a law of faith (Gal. 3:12) but it was a law of works. This did not mean that the law given through Moses was altogether different in its content from the teaching that came through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear enough that the ceremonial or ritualistic part of the law was different for it was only "a shadow" of that which was to come (Col. 2:16-17, Heb. 8:4-5, Heb. 10:1) but that part of the law governing man's relationship to his fellowman, sometimes called the moral law, was basically the same as that given through Christ. It is apparent that the very nature of the case demanded a change in the form of ritual or worship and likewise demanded a continuation of the moral teaching since the same principles of uprightness are needed to guide man in the field of human relationships. If the moral law under the law of Moses and the moral teaching through Christ are basically the same, why is the law of Moses called the "law of works," and the law of Christ called the "law of faith"? Is it because they were different in the forms of worship employed? The answer to this question is, "No." The difference in the nature of the two laws is due to the fact that they are given to people with different attitudes toward God and for different purposes.

The people to whom the law of Moses was given were people in the main who had failed to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. They were descendents of Jacob who had forsaken Jehovah and served other gods

(I Sam. 8:8). When God led this great body of people out of the land of Egypt to cause them to inherit the land of Canaan in fulfillment of his promise made to Abraham, it was necessary that they have a law that would be effective in controlling them and maintaining order among them. In Egypt this had been accomplished by the Egyptian government, but on leaving Egypt that was left behind. Within the first three months after leaving Egypt, despite the fact that God had miraculously delivered them from the throes of Egyptian bondage, they repeatedly showed that they did not believe in God. Therefore, it was evident that they would not voluntarily and willingly follow his teaching. After proving them on this point, God led them up to Mount Sinai. Since it was necessary that order be maintained among them that God might fulfill his promise to Abraham and since they were not impelled by faith in God to follow his teaching, God set up arrangements by which he compelled them to do so. From Mount Sinai God gave these people the law under such terrifying conditions that they accepted it not because they believed in the goodness and the promises of God but because they feared him. The power of this law to unbelievers was continually maintained by fear inspiring experiences as occasion demanded.

From this it is clear that the immediate purpose of the law was to produce action, to maintain order, to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise with respect to Abraham's fleshly descendents. However, its ultimate purpose was to contribute to the fulfillment of the promise

to Abraham that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. This whole picture is briefly set forth in the Galatian letter. In speaking of the law of Moses, Paul said, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made" (Gal. 3:19). "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:23-24). Thus, it is easily seen that the law of Moses was not a law of salvation but rather a necessary arrangement to meet the existing temporary conditions and while doing this, being a shadow of the good things to come, it would serve to bring those who were so disposed to the Christ.

When the time came for God to fulfill his promise unto Abraham a fuller revelation of God was given through the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Christ, love God and by this faith and love are impelled to obey God. Their purpose of heart is to seek to know and to do the things that please God. Thus the law of God means quite a different thing to them. It is not a law of demand but a teaching that directs and when it is obeyed as a law of demand its character has been changed. It is evident that the one doing so is not a person who has been reconciled to God, who has the love of God in his heart and who seeks to honor God by putting his trust in God and obeying his teaching.

These people to whom Paul wrote for the most part had lived under this law of works through their ancestors

for some fourteen hundred years and not having known any other kind of religious law until they learned of the teaching of Christ, it was naturally very difficult for them to understand the nature of Christianity. Hence, it was necessary that Paul extravagantly emphasize this point of difference. The Christian dispensation, so far as teaching and practice are concerned, is not a new one in the sense that all of God's teaching under the law of Moses was discarded and altogether a new teaching given, but the moral law during the preceding period has continued with renewed emphasis while the forms and ritual have been replaced by those that are suitable under the new relationship.

We should observe further that the effects of the law of works and of the law of faith upon the attitude of man are quite different. A man living under a religious law of works, whether it is the law of Moses or his perversion of the law of Christ, glories in himself, but the person who is led by the law of faith feels his humility, puts his trust in God and gives glory to God. For under the law his righteousness is his own but under faith his righteousness is from God. Paul sets forth this contrast in writing the Philippians. "And be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Phil. 3:9). The latter is imperative in man's relationship to God if he is to give honor to God. As long as man glories in himself, he will honor himself instead of denying himself to honor God. As Paul pointed out to the Corinthians

that the very nature of man's status in the gospel is "that no flesh should glory before God" (I Cor. 1:29). Then Paul added, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:30-31).

Paul presented the same thought to the Romans by asking and answering two questions, "Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). Under the law of works man trusted in his own accomplishment and the righteousness was man's so he might glory in himself, but under the law of faith man trusts in God and to God is given the glory. Thus, by the law of faith man's glorying in himself is excluded. The Jews had been given the law of works because they were without faith and a law of faith would have been without effect. They were forced to keep the law. One cannot be forced to believe but he can be forced to act. In fact, when force or compulsion is employed in Christianity there is grave danger of making it a law of works rather than a law of faith.

Here Paul is showing the contrasting nature in two laws—the law of works and the law of faith. Some people seem to have the impression that the law of works has been replaced by faith without a law. However, Paul did not say that glorying had been excluded by faith but by a law of faith or a more exact translation, "the" law of faith. These two laws represent two dispensations.

(Two periods that are distinctly different in man's relationship to God, hence, different in nature of law.) In speaking of the Christian dispensation, words are used frequently to give emphasis to the major point of contrast between it and the Mosaic dispensation. Thus, Paul said, "For ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). This should have been translated, "For ye are not under 'the' law, but under 'the' grace," for it evidently means that they were not under the law of Moses, but under the grace, or favor, of God which was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Christ. He did not mean that they were under no law at all for he wrote the Corinthians, "To them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ" (I Cor. 9:21). Thus it is clear that Christians were under law. It is called the "law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), "the law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25), and, "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). All of these expressions are to identify the new teaching.

It should be added that those who insist on there being no demand for Christians to obey law have evidently overlooked the fact that grace did not come alone but as John wrote, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Furthermore, grace came teaching. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12), and that Peter wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your

obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22). The grace, or favor, of God was in the Lord Jesus Christ, teaching the truth and people purified their souls by obeying the truth—by obeying the law of Christ.

In the second paragraph above another pair of contrasting terms is used which is used frequently by Paul in the Roman letter to aid in depicting the contrast between the law of Moses and the law of Christ. They are the words "law" and "grace." The people who are disposed to teach that there are no specified practices as works of faith that man must engage in now in order to inherit eternal life point to the fact that there is no definite article before the word "law" in the expression, "For ye are not under law," and, therefore, it indicates that the term "law" is used in a general sense. Hence, those who are under grace are not under any law. As further support of this idea, they point to the fact that there is no definite article in the Greek in Romans 3:21, that it should read, "But now apart from law a righteousness of God hath been manifested." This nicety of language construction does not appear to be a sound basis for interpretation in this case when the total situation is taken into consideration. In the first place, the definite article is frequently omitted in the Greek text. no exceptions to this. Of sixty-six times that Paul used Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians are certainly the word translated "law" in the Roman letter where an article might well have been used it only occurred thirty-one times. Of thirty-one such occasions in the Galatian

letter, it was used only ten times. And further, of the thirty-five cases in the Roman letter where the article was omitted the translators of the American Standard Version supplied the article "the" in thirty cases, "a" in two, and no article in three. In the Galatian letter in twenty of the twenty-one cases where the article was omitted in the Greek, the article "the" was supplied in the English; in one case the article "a." Other versions of the Bible follow a similar pattern. This certainly indicates that the omission of the article in the Greek is no evidence whatsoever that the term "law" is being used in a general sense.

From this it is also evident that the use of the definite article in English that is not found in the Greek will have to be determined by the context. Since the one law under consideration in both the Roman and Galatian letters was the law of Moses, and since this was the only recorded religious law of which these people were acquainted, this is the law to which Paul was always referring when he used the word "law" unless it was accompanied by some word designating another law. So in Paul's statement, "For ye are not under law, but under grace," the evident meaning is that those people were no longer under the Mosaic system but under the grace, or the favor, that God had promised to Abraham and had fulfilled in Christ, that they had the real privilege of becoming spiritual children of Abraham and heirs of the promised inheritance.

But let us return to further examination of the immediate context in the third chapter of Romans. Having



thus briefly indicated in verse twenty-seven that their glorying was excluded because they were under a law of faith, speaking in terms of the identifying characteristics of the two laws, Paul concludes, "That a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28). In verses twenty-nine and thirty, Paul shows that this is true of both the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

After having shown that both Jews and Gentiles shall be justified by faith rather than by the works of the law, Paul closes the chapter by raising the question, "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith?" and replying, "God forbid: nay, we establish the law." If we accept this translation which is the most common, it evidently teaches that through faith we do not make the law of Moses of no effect but on the contrary we establish it or make it more effective. This would be the case because those who believe in God, as did Abraham, will love and honor God and love his fellowman as did Abraham, and these are the great commandment and the second commandment of the law upon which the whole law hangeth (Matt. 22:36-40). If we accept the exact translation of the Greek as do some, the verse will read, "Do we then make law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish law." In this case, the meaning would be that the law of God would not be set aside but would be followed more carefully than ever. This seems to be borne out by Paul's discussion in chapters six, seven and eight of the Roman letter.

It matters not which of these translations or interpre-

tations one accepts. It is evident that by this question and answer Paul established the fact that justification by faith will not make the law of God less effective, but more effective, that there will be more demand for doing the will of God rather than less.

At this point, after having shown that those who were justified under the law of faith and not under the law of works would pattern their lives after God's teaching by doing his will, Paul took up the case of Abraham. We should bear in mind that the case of Abraham was not brought into this discussion merely to tell about Abraham, but rather as further support that people cannot be justified by the works of the law. This Paul proposed to do by showing that not even Abraham, the great father of the Jewish people, was justified by such works, meritorious works of his own, works that were separate and apart from faith in God. That this was the trouble with the works of the law, Paul sets forth in this same book. "But Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works" (Rom. 9:31-32). It is true that Paul's wording in verses three, four and five of the fourth chapter of Romans taken alone would leave the impression that no works of any kind had any part in Abraham's justification, but such would not be consistent with what Paul presented just before using these words, "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). How could faith serve to establish the law of God or to make it more effective in the lives of those who

believed if it did not make greater demand for doing the teachings of the law rather than making obedience unnecessary?

Not only does the immediate context make unthinkable the idea that Abraham was justified by "faith alone" as a mere mental state, but it is in conflict with other teachings of Paul's set forth in this same book both before and after this immediate discussion. In the introduction of the letter, after speaking of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Paul said, "Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake; among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's" (Rom. 1:5-6). Paul did not say that the purpose of his apostleship was unto faith among all the nations but unto obedience of faith, or obedience to the faith, among all the nations and then pointed out that the Romans were called to be Jesus Christ's on this same basis, as they were among the nations.

In the second chapter of the letter after warning those who practiced evil things against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Paul continued, "Who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh

good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:6-11). These verses certainly leave no doubt that faith as a mental state is not sufficient, but well-doing, obeying the truth, working that which is good is necessary in order to enter into eternal life.

As Paul brings to a close his discussion of the law and the Jewish relationship to God, he has this to say, "Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:20-22). The first of this statement tells the Romans that they stand by their faith. At the close of the statement he warns that they will be cut off if they do not continue in God's goodness. Christians do not merit God's blessings through good conduct, but good conduct is indispensable as a part of a real faith in God. Paul closed his letter in the same tone in which he began. "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandments of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:25-26). We see from this that the gospel has been made known unto all the nations,

unto obedience of faith, or obedience to the faith, not that people might merely believe in God, but that they should obey him.

One other excerpt from this letter will suffice for the present purpose. "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18). Here Paul first points out the fact that obedience is that which characterizes one as a servant, whether it be a servant of sin or of righteousness, whether a servant of Satan or of God. Next he thanks God that they have ceased to be servants of sin and have become servants of God through obedience, that they have obeyed the teaching that was delivered unto them, thus being made free from sin they became servants of righteousness. Certainly this is a far cry from saying that they had been made free from sin and servants of righteousness by the mere mental state of faith.

Having supported his teaching of justification by faith by the case of Abraham in that he had not attained unto righteousness because of his own meritorious works such as were demanded under the law of Moses but through faith in God, he passes on to make use of the testimony of David. "Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness

apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" (Rom. 4:6-8). Paul made application of the quotation from David before quoting it. We should not overlook the fact that David lived under the law of Moses and in order to be righteous through the law it was necessary to do the works of the law perfectly for the law provided no forgiveness. David had learned through bitter experience that he had failed in his own righteousness as judged by the law, but through faith in God, in penitence he had received forgiveness. So he knew how blessed and happy are those whose iniquities are forgiven and to whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from a perfect performance of the works of the law.

Having shown that his doctrine of justification by faith is not new but was the means through which both Abraham and David had righteousness reckoned unto them, he passes on to show that the blessed opportunity is open to both Gentiles and Jews. As evidence that righteousness might be reckoned unto the Gentiles, or uncircumcision by faith, he pointed to the fact that Abraham's faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness while he was in uncircumcision that he might be the father of all them that believed though they be in uncircumcision (Rom. 4:9-11). Concerning those under the law he said, "And the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision" (Rom. 4:12). Thus it is clear that

Abraham was not the father of all who accepted circumcision. That is, that the blessings that God had promised to Abraham were not for all of the circumcision but only for those of the circumcision who also walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham, only those who had faith in God and who lived lives that were faithful to God in the same sense as did Abraham. This was illustrated in the life of David to which Paul has already made reference. This statement and also the case of David objectively illustrate the fact that those who are to enjoy the promises that have come to men through Abraham the forgiveness of their sins, whose faith will be reckoned for righteousness, must "also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." They must live lives which testify to the fact that they do believe in God.

Continuing his discussion, Paul showed that the promise to Abraham could not be enjoyed through the law. Then he vividly depicts Abraham's faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness, closing the description with these words, "And being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21). This should remind us of the description of faith which we have studied earlier. "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is the kind of faith that will work in our lives and will also be reckoned for righteousness. This Paul sets forth in his conclusion. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:23-25).

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 15

1. Indicate the use that has been made of Abraham's faith by New Testament writers in explaining the way of righteousness.
2. Give the gist of Paul's discussion of Abraham's faith in Romans chapter four.
3. The meaning of what words determines the meaning of his discussion.
4. How must the meaning of these words be determined?
5. What was Paul's purpose and what the definite point of contrast?
6. Why was it necessary that this point of contrast be emphasized?
7. What caused the law of Moses to be the law of works and the law of Christ the law of faith?
8. State the purpose of the law of Moses and describe the people to whom it was given.
9. Describe the people to whom the law of faith was given.
10. State the effects of the two laws upon the attitude of the respective adherents to each.
11. By what law was glorying excluded?
12. Show that the statement, "Ye are not under law" does not mean that they were not under any law at all.
13. Show how grace is related to the law of Christ.
14. Why is it unsafe to assume that the absence of the definite article before the word for law in the Greek indicates that it means "law" in a general sense?
15. What is the exact meaning of Paul's statement, "Ye are not under law but under grace"?
16. What did Paul say they did not do to the law by the teaching of faith and what did they do to it?
17. What does this show concerning the gospel Paul preached?
18. What use did Paul make of the case of Abraham?
19. Give teaching from the preceding chapters of Romans that would be contradicted by the interpreting of Paul's use of Abraham's faith reckoned for righteousness as meaning "faith alone."



20. Give teaching from chapters of Romans that follow that would be contradicted by such an interpretation.
21. Explain Paul's use of the case of David.
22. What use did Paul make of the fact that Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness while he was in uncircumcision?
23. How did Paul also show that the faith of Abraham among the Jews must be a working faith?
24. Show how Paul's use of faith including works agrees with the description of faith given in an earlier lesson.

## LESSON 16

# FAITH RECKONED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Continued)

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, some of whom seemed to be in grave danger of turning away from the teachings of Christ to accept circumcision and become subject to the law, Paul made a similar use of the example of Abraham's faith. He introduced the matter in these words, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:6-7). In this letter Paul contrasted the works of the law and faith in Christ in very much the same manner as in the Roman letter. He continued his discussion to show that these blessings that were promised through Abraham are not to be had by the works of the law but rather by "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6).

Now let us consider James' discussion of Abraham's faith—the faith that was reckoned for righteousness. Since James presents the case of Abraham as an illustration of a lesson on faith, it appears that a review of his whole discussion is necessary to our best understanding.

James introduces his discussion of the topic by the very question that is causing so much trouble in the religious world today. "What doth it profit, my breth-

ren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?" (Jas. 2:14). Because the answers being given are provided by men and are causing people to misunderstand much of the Bible teaching on other topics, because of my personal interest in the salvation of your soul, may I beg you to weigh carefully James' answer to this question and should the answer which you now hold not be in complete agreement with it, lay aside the human and accept the divine.

Let us observe first the form of James' question. You will note that James did not say, "What doth it profit if a man hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?" but rather, "What doth it profit if a man 'say' he hath faith but have not works? can that faith save him?" To me this implies that James is not speaking of faith in its true meaning but rather suggesting a perverted use of the term. James follows this first question with another question which implies a negative answer to the first one. "If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (Jas. 2:15-16). Then to further emphasize the futility of such a so-called faith, James draws the conclusion, "Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (Jas. 2:17). By this conclusion James implies that there is another kind of faith, a living faith, and also that a living faith works for if it did not work it would be dead.

In his next statement, James further implies that such a faith is lacking in reality. "Yea, a man will say, Thou

hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith” (Jas. 2:18). A faith that does not have works has no objective evidence of its existence. Next, we have James’ description of that so-called faith. “Thou believest that God is one” (Jas. 2:19). These people seem to hold a conviction that there is one God, but this does not agree with the description of a true faith as given in the Hebrew letter. “Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). A comparison of these two descriptions shows beyond question that what is being called faith here is not the faith that is reckoned for righteousness. James further shows the utter worthlessness of such a faith by the irony which follows his description. “Thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder” (Jas. 2:19). Their faith was no more the true faith than was that of demons and certainly there is no indication that the faith of demons will be reckoned for righteousness. To this James adds a conclusion in question form. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?” (Jas. 2:20). This conclusion makes it clear that the possessor of such a faith would never bear fruit, would never become a new creature, would never have the Spirit of Christ, and consequently would be none of his (Rom. 8:9).

After having shown that faith without works will avail nothing, James presents the case of Abraham to show that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness is a living, active, working faith. He asks, “Was not Abraham

our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" (Jas. 2:21). The use of a question here suggests that this was an accepted idea with respect to Abraham. The statement that follows relates the case directly to the former discussion. "Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect" (Jas. 2:22). This statement shows how closely faith and works are interlinked. Real faith is living and active and we describe what is accomplished by the word "works." By works faith is made perfect or complete for works is a complement of faith and without works faith is defective, barren, dead. This is shown by the phrases, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed . . . By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise" (Heb. 11:8-9); "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac" (Heb. 11:17). As was true in the case of Abraham, real faith and its works are inseparable. You can no more separate them than you can separate fire from its heat. Where there is fire there will always be heat, but there would be no heat without fire. Such is the relationship between faith and works.

There are some people who reject this teaching by James and to defend their views accuse James of contradicting the statements made by Paul relative to Abraham's faith. However, James leaves no grounds for such a charge for he immediately points out the fact, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God" (Jas. 2:23). There might be some difference of opinion as to

how this scripture was fulfilled in the offering up of Isaac, but if we accept the idea that James was writing by inspiration there is certainly no foundation for the charge of contradiction for surely Abraham's works in the offering up of Isaac could not fulfill the scripture, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness," and at the same time contradict it.

James evidently considers his reasoning conclusive as he follows it with the assertion, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (Jas. 2:24). It is true that Paul says, "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16), and applies the same idea to the case of Abraham in Romans 4:2, "For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God," but Paul's and James' statements are not in contradiction for they are talking about works that are completely different. Any reasonable reading of the contexts of the teaching of the two men makes it clear that James is speaking of the works of faith but Paul is referring to the works of the law, or works which constitute one's own righteousness. James is showing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to be a living, active influence in one's life which will impel him to honor Christ as Lord by seeking to do his will implicitly, while Paul is showing that one is to be justified by such a faith and not by his own ability to keep the law of Moses or any

other law perfectly. It is evident that Paul is speaking of this same kind of working faith from his statement in regard to the Jews of whom Abraham would be the father. "And the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision" (Rom. 4:12). Note that they must "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham"; they must live as did Abraham.

After finishing his reasoning on the subject and presenting his conclusion in these words, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (Jas. 2:24), he illustrated the lesson by the case of Rahab the harlot. "And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" (Jas. 2:25). In the record of the case of Rahab, it says, "Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent" (Josh. 6:17). She saved herself and the house from being destroyed with the people of Jericho by what she did. This was the obedience of her faith which she expressed to the spies in these words, "I know that Jehovah hath given you the land" (Josh. 2:9). Of this the writer of Hebrews said, "By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:31). From this it is clear that Rahab's faith became effective through her works.

James closes his discussion by presenting his lesson in

the form of an analogy. "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. 2:26). He compares faith and works with the body and the spirit. As long as the spirit was in the body there was life, but when the spirit departed from the body the body was dead. Even so, as long as works are in the faith, the faith is alive, but when works depart or cease to be, faith is dead and James has already shown the worthlessness of a dead faith. Certainly there is no more emphatic way to say that faith apart from works is dead, or that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness is the faith that follows the law of God.

When teaching is presented to show that man's salvation is dependent upon his faithful effort to honor God by doing his will instead of his claim to believe in God, frequently someone opposes it with the statement, "But Jesus said, 'Fear not, only believe.'" It is true Jesus said, "Fear not, only believe" (Mark 5:36), but he did not say it in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" The circumstances under which it was said would never permit any such application of his statement. For a clear understanding of Jesus' statement, it is necessary to review the incidents that occasioned it. When Jesus had crossed from Decapolis to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, fell at his feet and besought him that he would come and lay his hands on his little daughter and heal her for she was at the point of death. Jesus started with Jairus to his house with a great multitude following him. A woman who had been afflicted for twelve years pressed



through the multitude and touched Jesus' garments and was healed. During the delay caused by this incident, messengers came from Jairus' house and said to him, "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further? But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe" (Mark 5:35-36). From these statements, it is clear that Jesus was not speaking with reference to salvation, neither was he in reality telling Jairus to believe in him for he had already shown that he believed in him by leaving the bedside of the dying child whom he loved dearly to come to Jesus for help. In reality, Jesus' statement was to encourage Jairus to continue to believe in him and not to permit this distressing news with the advice from the messengers to cause him to feel that the case was now beyond Jesus' power. Jesus never taught people to "only believe," but rather to "fully believe" and to act like they do believe.

In the Hebrew letter the faith of Abraham is used along with that of many others for the express purpose of illustrating the nature of faith—that faith works. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed" (Heb. 11:8). "By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise" (Heb. 11:9). "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac" (Heb. 11:17). In this letter no reference is made to the fact that Abraham's faith was reckoned for righteousness but in using the faith of Noah to stress the same lesson the author wrote: "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his

house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11:7). This statement leaves no doubt that by what Noah did he "became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith," the same righteousness of which Abraham was heir.

This close relationship between faith and works is given further emphasis by statements from the epistle to the Hebrews that show the close relationship between unbelief and disobedience. In warning the Hebrew Christians against failure to enter into the blessings which God had promised them, the author uses as an example the failure of their forefathers who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses to enter into the rest that God had promised them. He states the reason for their failure in these words, "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:18-19). Why did God swear that they should not enter into his rest? They were disobedient. Why were they unable to enter? Because of unbelief. Hence, disobedience and unbelief are both expressed as the cause of their failure. The author also expresses a warning and an exhortation in a similar dual form of expression. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12); and, "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11). From this we see that unbelief and dis-

obedience are as inseparable in the failure of God's people as are faith and works in the success of God's people.

To interpret Paul's statements about Abraham's faith in the first of the fourth chapter of Romans as excluding all kinds of works not only makes it contradict the immediate context and other teachings of Paul's within the same letter, but it is in conflict with Paul's teachings to Christians at other places. In referring to the conditions among the Galatians Paul said, "Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7). This does not indicate that Paul was not interested in their faith for he has referred to that in the preceding verse, but it does show that he was concerned about their manner of living, of the danger of their failing to obey the truth. If obedience were not a necessary part of a living faith, why should Paul be concerned about it. In consoling the Thessalonian people in their suffering, Paul wrote, "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (II Thess. 1:7-8). Who are to feel the vengeance of Christ? Are they those who do not believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yes, to be sure and also those whose faith is not sufficiently real to cause them to obey the gospel. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God" (I Cor. 7:19). Certainly Paul means to say here

that the thing that counts is “keeping of the commandments of God.” Paul wrote the Philippians, “The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9). On what conditions would the God of peace be with them? “These things do.”

The idea that Abraham’s faith alone was reckoned to him for righteousness without any obedience to the law of faith that would manifest the spirit of Christ is not only contradictory to the teachings of the apostle Paul and to those of James but also to the teaching of the entire New Testament. The frequent use of such words as, “do,” “work,” “serve,” “obey,” and “keep his commandments” in describing relationships and stating conditions upon which man’s enjoyment of God’s promises depends and the use of their opposites in stating the basis of man’s failure to receive God’s promises together with the numerous statements of what to do and what not to do in order to inherit the blessings of God but make no use of these words shows the utter impossibility of the faith that is reckoned for righteousness being “faith alone,” of “faith without works.” In this lesson we shall briefly give attention to some of the statements that make it evident that there is something that we must do if we would inherit eternal life. The statements of direct instruction in what to do will be considered in the lessons that immediately follow this one.

The lack of space will not permit a discussion of the statements quoted below. Please observe the conflict between them and the doctrine that it is not necessary

for man to do anything but believe in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:50). "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts 22:10). "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46). "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28). "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (John 14:21). "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Can these statements be misunderstood?

Peter said, "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure:

for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11). "Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" (I Pet. 4:19). "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35). "And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear" (I Pet. 1:17). "For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Pet. 2:21). "For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Pet. 4:17). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22). Was Peter wrong? How had these people purified their souls?

The apostle John wrote, "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22). "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (I John 2:3). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before

the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:12-13). If we are to be judged by our works and if keeping God's commandments is the embodiment of our love for God, how can we be saved by faith alone.

If man is saved by faith without works, what is the meaning of these statements? "And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (Jas. 1:22). "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (Jas. 1:25). "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6).

Now why should we not understand Paul's discussion of faith in the Roman letter, especially his statements about Abraham found in the fourth chapter, to mean that man is justified by "faith alone" or faith apart from the works of faith? First, when we take into consideration the religious idea that had prevailed among the people to whom Paul wrote and the purpose for which he wrote,

we can easily understand why he so strongly contrasted faith and works or the law of faith and the law of works. The biased thinking of the people demanded it. Second, such an interpretation would unquestionably be in disagreement with the immediate context—chapter three. Third, such an interpretation would contradict statements made by Paul in the Roman letter both in earlier chapters and those that follow chapter four. Fourth, such an interpretation would be contrary to Paul's teaching to the Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Philippians and others. Fifth, such an interpretation would be opposed to the teaching of James, Peter, John and the Hebrew letter. Sixth, such an interpretation is in direct conflict with the entire New Testament teaching—Jesus' personal teaching and also that through his apostles. Seventh, such an interpretation would grossly misrepresent the life of Abraham as it is recorded in the book of Genesis. How can one honestly consider these things and be willing to accept a doctrine that is so hostile to the truth? How can you afford to base your hope for the eternal inheritance upon a doctrine that has to be supported by such a distortion of Paul's teaching?

From this examination of the New Testament teaching on the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, it appears reasonable to conclude that it is a living, active, working faith. This does not say what the works of faith are. It gives no description of the things that the believer must do. It does not set forth the commandments that are to be obeyed. But if the New Testament teaching has not been misrepresented, it should be apparent to



everyone that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness is a faith that works. We shall consider how it works and what it does in the lessons that follow.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 16

1. How does Paul use the example of Abraham's faith in the Galatian letter?
2. What is not, and what is, the question with which James introduces his discussion of faith?
3. He continues his thought with what question?
4. What is his conclusion and what does it imply?
5. By what proposition does he challenge the claim of such a person?
6. How does he describe it, disdain it, and announce it worthless?
7. For what purpose does James present the case of Abraham's faith being reckoned for righteousness?
8. What is the relationship between faith and works of faith?
9. How does James show that there can be no contradiction between the teaching that one is justified by faith and being justified by works?
10. What shows that James considers the reasoning conclusive?
11. Harmonize James' and Paul's teaching on faith.
12. Give James' illustration of his lesson.
13. Give James' analogy that shows the relationship between faith and works.
14. Show that, "Fear not, only believe" was never used to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?"
15. Give evidence from the Hebrew letter that faith works.
16. Show that to interpret Paul's statements about Abraham's faith in Romans four as excluding all kinds of works contradicts Paul's teaching to people at other places.
17. Show that such is also contradictory to Jesus' teaching.
18. Show it to be contradictory to Peter's teaching.
19. Show it to be contradictory to John's teaching.
20. Give a few statements that are unintelligible if man is saved without any kind of works.
21. Summarize the evidence presented to show that the faith reckoned for righteousness must be a living, working faith.

## LESSON 17

# FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE

We have learned from our former study that faith works; that faith as it is commonly spoken of in the Bible works; that the “faith that is reckoned for righteousness” works. We have learned that it is the very nature of faith to work and that which claims to be faith that does not work is false and is no better than that which demons had. In this lesson we shall consider how faith works, faith in God, and what it does.

To learn how faith works we now turn to the writings of the apostle Paul. In the Galatian letter he wrote, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6). In order to get the full meaning of this statement, it is necessary to examine the context. This statement was made to people who were Christians who had been erroneously taught that it was necessary for them to be circumcised in order to be saved. This statement had been preceded by extended, detailed, convincing evidence that they should not be circumcised, and the warning that should they do so Christ would profit them nothing and that they would be obligated to keep the whole law. Then the state of those who accepted circumcision was contrasted with that of those who did not in these words, “Ye are severed from Christ, ye who

would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5:4-5). Now since so much emphasis had been given to the teaching that they should not be circumcised in contrasting the Christian way with justification by the law, lest the Galatians get the false impression that Christianity was negative or passive in character and conclude that not being circumcised would suffice, Paul made this comprehensive statement. It covered the issue of circumcision and also showed how that they should "by faith wait for the hope of righteousness." They had been told by their false teachers that they must be circumcised to be saved, but Paul told them that circumcision would not avail them anything in Christ. Then he added neither would uncircumcision, neither would the fact that they merely rejected circumcision avail anything, but the thing that would avail in Christ Jesus was "faith working through love."

What did Paul say would avail or accomplish? By what should they "wait for the hope of righteousness"? By what could they enter into life eternal? The answer is, "By faith." This has always been the answer and always will be. Was this Paul's answer on this occasion? Basically, yes, but lest the Galatians make the mistake that many other people have made, Paul told them how faith would avail or would accomplish the "hope of righteousness." This would be accomplished by "faith working through love."

Then how does faith work? The answer is, "Through love." Does all faith work through love? No. Faith

frequently works for a material reward, but a true faith in God works through love. Faith as it is found in the common activities of man becomes effective in his life through being the assurance of that for which he hopes, while faith in God becomes effective not only through the assurance of attaining far greater rewards than can be reached by any other course in life but also through the production of love, the most universal and the most powerful motivating influence in the life of man. The gospel, the power of God unto salvation, the truth, the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, if given a place in the heart of man will not only provide him with a conviction of things not seen and an assurance of the great promises of God but will also give him a sense of reality of the love of God thereby awakening in him a love for God. We should not overlook the fact that the climatic evidences that Jesus is the Christ, his death, burial and resurrection, which beget faith in the heart of man also portray to him the touching story of God's love. Hence, with the individual where the gospel has become effective, his selfish, self-seeking of the good things which God has provided has been overshadowed by a personal feeling of love and gratitude to God for so richly providing the glorious eternal inheritance and so freely giving his only begotten Son that man might be redeemed and purified, and might enter into that glorious estate. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that Paul declares that the thing which accomplishes or avails in Christ Jesus is "faith working through love" and not merely faith, or even faith that works, for in reality love for God in the

heart of the individual, a love that works, is the greatest possible evidence of the presence of a real faith in God.

Then if one believes that Jesus is the Christ, he believes God's love for him. If he believes God loves him, he will love God. If he loves God, he will keep God's commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). In order to keep God's commandments, he must know what they are. Therefore, if he loves God, he will study God's word and learn God's commandments. Furthermore, if one claims to love God and does not keep his commandments, there is something terribly wrong in the case. He is evidently deceived in the matter, for the love of God is to keep his commandments. If he is deceived in the matter, his claim is false. If his claim is false, he does not love God and his religion is not Christianity. If his religion is not Christianity, he is without hope that is founded in truth. We may also observe that if one does not love God, he does not have the faith that will save him or that will avail, for Paul has declared that the thing that avails is "faith working through love." Therefore, without love, faith cannot accomplish. Thus, we see that the two great influences which are effective in directing man's activities are inseparably conjoined. There can be no love of God without faith in God, and faith in God cannot be effective without love for God. Thus if we have a true faith in God, we will keep his commandments; and, if we have a true love for God, we will keep his commandments.

Which commandments will we keep? Every one that

he has given, whether they teach us things to do or things not to do; whether failure to keep them is accompanied by ill effects that are discernible or not; whether they are relative to worship and church relationship, personal purity or the manner in which we should deal with our fellow man; whether we can see any reason in doing them or not; whether they fit in with our convenience or call for extraordinary effort on our part; whether we happen to know them or not, every teaching found in the Bible record of God's revelation through the Lord Jesus Christ and also the teachings that were given verbally to the early Christians that come to us through their examples will be followed carefully by everyone who believes the gospel and loves God. When emphasis is given to the fact that we must keep God's commandments or follow God's teaching no one should get the impression that it is for the purpose of earning, or in any sense meriting, eternal life, but for the purpose of showing our love for God. It is an expression of living gratitude for God's mercy and loving kindness in providing for our purification through the blood of Christ. Neither should one get the impression from this emphasis on keeping God's commandments that God requires or expects perfection in his children. He knows our weaknesses and our failures and has provided for their forgiveness if we believe him and love him and if we do not love him there is no way to be pleasing in his sight.

It might be well to call attention to the fact here that Paul's statement, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith

working through love" (Gal. 5:6), was made to people who had already accepted Christ, people who were Christians. Due to this fact, there are some people who are disposed to minimize the importance of God's teaching to those who have not become Christians by limiting the application of this to the practices of Christian living. This is probably what Paul had in mind at the moment but he was stating a principle which applies to faith in God wherever you find it. This we shall illustrate by the study of specific commandments as they are addressed to the individual who first hears and believes the gospel.

When a person hears the gospel and sincerely believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he not only believes the touching story of God's love and is moved to love God but he is also convinced of his own sinfulness and wickedness in the sight of God. He is made fully conscious of the fact that he is living a life that is reprehensible to God. He has come to know that he is living as an enemy of him whom he has learned to love. If his faith is living and his love sincere, he will be filled with regret that he has so shamefully disregarded the wishes of one who has loved him so much, or, that he has ignorantly lived a life that was so displeasing to God. If these thoughts continue to occupy his mind and these feelings continue to fill his heart, he will change his thinking, he will change his sense of values, he will change his way of living. In short, he will repent.

This accords fully with the teaching of the apostle Paul. To the Romans he wrote, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not

knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). And to the Corinthians he wrote, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10). These two verses tell us exactly how repentance is produced. In the first we are told the cause that produces it—"the goodness of God." In the second we are given the process within the individual through which it is produced—"godly sorrow worketh repentance." To this description we only have to add that which is of necessity implied and we have the same as is given above. The goodness of God awakens a love for God causing a sorrow toward God in the heart of the sinner because his life is offensive to God and this sorrow works a change or repentance. In this we see "faith working through love." This is also an illustration, at least in part, of Paul's enunciation, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10). For in this we see the influence of a sincere faith in his heart. It turns man's heart away from his life of sin making such a life repulsive to him, humbling his heart before God in readiness to accept the way of righteousness in Christ.

The fact that God has commanded man to repent is further evidence that repentance is an expression of man's love for God, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3). Surely no one would doubt that God has commanded people to repent. Jesus said when he was here, "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). Jesus



showed the people that repentance was a universal need. "Now there were some present at that very season who told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5). Jesus spake two parables to show the momentous significance of repentance. After giving the parable of the lost sheep, he said, "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). And at the close of the parable of the lost coin, he said, "Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). Jesus also showed the vital place of repentance in the salvation of man by his statement to the apostles after the resurrection. "And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

After Jesus' ascension, on the Day of Pentecost after receiving the Holy Spirit which was to guide them into

all the truth, the apostles began their proclamation of the gospel. And when the people who heard the preaching that Jesus was the Christ, were pricked in their hearts and asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), Peter, one of those who heard Jesus say before his ascension, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47), said unto them, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). A short time later in speaking to the people in Solomon's porch, Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). He gave further emphasis to his teaching on repentance by the last statement of that speech before he was interrupted by the Jewish authorities. "Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:26). If Jesus was to bless the people in turning them away from their iniquities, it is evident that without this turning away, without repentance, they would not be blessed. In speaking of Jesus before the council, Peter declared, "Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:31). We are told that when the people who contended with Peter for going to the house of Cornelius heard a full report of what happened there, "they held their peace, and glorified

God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). In his epistle, I find that Peter declared, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).

In Paul’s speech before Agrippa, he quoted God’s commission to him to preach to the Gentiles. What he was to accomplish among them was expressed in these words, “To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:18), and describes his fidelity to the vision as follows: “Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance” (Acts 26:19-20). What had God told Paul to do? “Open their eyes.” How was Paul to do this? By preaching to them the gospel. How do we know? Because Paul stated to the Corinthian people what he was sent to do. “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void” (I Cor. 1:17). How was this to open their eyes? It was to cause them to believe the truth, to believe that Jesus was the Christ, to know the goodness of God and to recognize their own sinfulness. Why was he to open

their eyes? Some would answer that they may believe and be saved. But that doesn't appear to be God's answer. God said, "That they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." And why should they do this? God said, "That they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." What did God say that they were to do that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance? "Turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." As evidence that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, what does Paul avow that he declared to the people of Damascus, Jerusalem, Judaea and also to the Gentiles? "That they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance." Upon this declaration, it is clear that a very important part of Paul's preaching to both Jews and Gentiles was the teaching that they must repent. Of this we have an example in his speech in Athens when he proclaimed, "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30). It is found that repentance was an important part of Paul's preaching, but not all of it by any means, as he later declares to Agrippa that he is to preach Christ to both small and great, "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead

should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

Is it possible for one to consider seriously these statements of Jesus, of Peter and of Paul and deny, or even doubt, that God has commanded the people of this dispensation to repent? Is it reasonable that the commandment to repent would not be included among those commandments, the keeping of which is one's love for God? Or is it conceivable that one can truly love God and know his life to be highly displeasing to God and not repent? Certainly in the obedience to this commandment we see "faith working through love" in the same way as in all of God's commandments and since we must love God in order to inherit eternal life we must obey his commandment to repent.

Reader, as you weigh the teaching which you have just read on the subject of repentance, you will find it reasonable and Biblical in its content; and if you are honest in your religious convictions and sincere in your search for the truth, as long as you think in terms of the Bible teaching you will be impelled to agree with the conclusion that man must repent in order to inherit eternal life. You may be disposed to accept the idea as your conviction until you recall the fact that you have heard good honest preachers, men in whom you have the utmost confidence, confidently and fervently proclaim from the pulpit or over the radio that the only thing that one must do in order to be saved or to inherit eternal life is to believe in Jesus. Then you recall, perhaps, that a large number of your relatives, including your immediate

family and a great host of your closest friends and associates agree with these preachers. As this continues with its weight of social influence it naturally occupies the center of your thinking and the Bible teaching which you were about to accept loses its appeal and is gradually pushed into the discard. In reality the decision has not been yours, you have merely adopted the thinking of someone else. May I plead with you not to be such a weakling. May I, in kindness, remind you that such a practice is dangerous, that you are gambling with your own eternal destiny. May I beg you never to accept the mere declarations of men nor allow your understanding to be blinded by social influence. The chances are more than equal that the other people who hold such ideas have accepted them as did you because of their confidence in the preachers that taught them, encouraged by the fact that many of their friends and relatives held them.

You cannot afford to accept the zeal and fervor of the preacher as evidence that his message is true. Remember the case of Saul of Tarsus to which I referred in the first lesson of this book. Certainly his zeal and fervor have never been surpassed by any preacher and certainly there is no man that could have been more sadly in error than was Saul of Tarsus. The question which should vitally concern you is not, "What does some preacher say?" but, "What does the Bible say?" Did Jesus ever answer the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" by saying, "Only believe"? Did any of the apostles or teachers of New Testament days ever say to those who asked the question, "What must we do to be saved?"

that all that was necessary was to believe on Jesus and at that very moment they would be saved? Where do we find such anywhere between the lids of God's book? In humility and in love for your soul, may I suggest that you read the Book for yourself and see. There is not only no such statement in the New Testament, there is not one fragment of truth in support of such a statement. There is not only no truth to support such a statement, but such a statement as it is commonly made is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the New Testament and also contradictory to all human reasoning based on facts that are provided in the New Testament.

When Jesus declared, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5), did he mean what he said? If so, it is clear that he meant that man must repent. "But," someone objects, "Repentance comes before faith. The New Testament says repent and believe the gospel." It is true that there are two statements in the New Testament where words similar to these are used but this application is a perversion of each of them. In Matthew's record we find, "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matt. 21:32). As indicated in this verse, this statement was made in regard to the work of John the Baptist. He came teaching the people that they should repent, that they should quit living in wickedness, in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, and here Jesus is reminding these people that after they had re-

jected John, the example of the publicans and harlots did not cause them any regret that they might reconsider and believe John. The other statement is found in Mark's gospel. "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). The content of these verses indicate clearly enough that the expression, "Repent ye, believe in the gospel," was being employed in that period of preparation described as, "The kingdom of God is at hand," when the gospel as it was preached by the apostles had not been concluded and was for the purpose that John's teaching fulfilled that they should repent of their wicked way of living and believe in the full revelation of the gospel which was yet to come. That this was a time before the gospel came into its real power is shown by Jesus' statement that was made at a much later date. "And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not. Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (John 5:38-39).

Now let us examine a case under the full gospel dispensation after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and his glorification that these facts might be preached as they were by the apostle Paul and described as being the gospel and we shall see beyond doubt that repentance does not precede faith. When the apostles preached this gospel on the Day of Pentecost saying, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly,



that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36), the people who heard it evidently believed it and were affected so that they cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Now what was Peter's answer to these people that believed that which had been preached? "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The very fact that Peter told these people to repent is unquestionable evidence that they had not repented as well as unquestionable evidence that they must repent if they were to expect forgiveness of their sins. If repentance is necessary and it did not take place before they believed, it had to take place after they believed.

Furthermore, the reasoning of the whole situation demands that repentance be preceded by faith. Let us recall again the fact that, "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The word of the gospel worked in those who believed (see I Thess. 2:13). Repentance was brought about by the gospel; hence, the gospel must be believed before it causes one to repent. In fact, how could one turn away from his wickedness and come to God without a faith in God. This is declared impossible by the writer of the Hebrew letter. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6).

In order to avoid this common sense view, someone might suggest that this is brought about through the power of the Spirit. But this will not explain the situation for the simple reason that we have not one single example in the whole New Testament record of the gospel dispensation where the Spirit was given to anyone in any form before he believed the gospel.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 17

1. What have we learned about faith?
2. Briefly, tell how faith works.
3. Why was it necessary for Paul to declare that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision would avail anything?
4. What only will accomplish anything and how?
5. Does all faith work through love?
6. Why does faith in God work through love?
7. What is the condition of one who claims to love God but does not seek to keep his commandments?
8. Which commandments should we keep? Enumerate.
9. To whom was this statement made about faith working through love and what abuse has been made of the fact?
10. What is the first work of faith through love?
11. Give Bible teaching that makes this clear.
12. What is further evidence that repentance is an expression of man's love for God?
13. Give evidence from Jesus' teaching that man is commanded to repent.
14. Give evidence from Peter's teaching that man is commanded to repent.
15. Give evidence from Paul's teaching that man is commanded to repent.
16. What influences is the reader warned against with reference to the application of this teaching on repentance in his own life?
17. If this teaching that man must repent is correct what teaching cannot be correct?
18. Show that repentance does not precede faith.

## LESSON 18

### FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE (Continued)

Now let us consider another commandment or teaching which man must comply with if he would inherit eternal life. This statement is in nowise meant to suggest that this is merely a formal requirement, it is rather demanded by the very nature of the case. It is another occasion of "faith working through love." An individual must love God and the Lord Jesus Christ if he has partaken of their nature. If he loves, Jesus, surely he will confess him as Lord, not because he is required to but because he is glad to do so.

The Bible statements relative to confessing Jesus as the Christ are not quite as direct as the teaching on repentance but there is certainly enough said to indicate that it is one of God's commandments and will be one of the practices of those who love God. During his personal ministry Jesus said, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). A parallel record of this is also found in Luke 12:8-9. The apostle Paul points out the fact that God exalted Jesus and gave him an exalted name that all men should be ready to confess. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto

him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Paul showed the Romans the importance of confession when he said, "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). And John testified as follows: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God" (I John 4:15). Certainly these statements together with those that are quoted in the following paragraph leave no doubt that man has been taught to confess Jesus as the Christ.

In regard to the confession, it appears that there has been a little confusion as to the matter of time. This probably is the result of man's tendency to formalize religion. May I first point out the fact that confession could not come before faith. For one cannot very well confess Jesus to be the Christ until he believes Jesus to be the Christ. Furthermore, since confession is to be made with the mouth, and faith is with the heart, it is a separate act; it is an act of "faith working through love." This indicates to us again that man has not completed that which is necessary for his salvation the very instant that he believes in his heart that Jesus is the Christ. Next, let us observe that the confession is not a single act but

rather is a continual practice of all those who love God as shown by the instruction given to Christians in the Hebrew letter. "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Heb. 13:15). This makes it clear that it is a practice to be followed by Christians.

Now what about the confession before one becomes a Christian or at the time that one enters into Christ? Or to put the question directly in terms of present-day religious practices by some people, should it precede one's baptism into Christ? Or should it be demanded at that time? Reversing the order of my answer to these questions, may I say that I know of no scriptural grounds for demanding a formal confession before baptism. Neither do I assume that by a public confession is the only way that one can make known the fact that he believes that Jesus is the Christ. However, it is one way and any person who believes Jesus to be the Christ, who loves him, and who is about to put him on as Lord, would certainly find such a sacred opportunity and would never consider it a formal demand. Paul's statement to Timothy certainly implies that Timothy made the good confession at about that time. "Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:12). There are some people who use the King James version that may consider the confession of the Ethiopian eunuch recorded in Acts 8:37, not only as an endorsement of the practice but as

authorization for demanding it. When the older manuscripts of this book are considered, there is some question of the authenticity of this verse. But should it be considered authentic, it is not sufficient to establish a regular demand of all believers. If you recall the circumstances, there is certainly no indication that this was a formal matter or that this confession was made to anyone except the preacher. In this case, we have two men riding along in the chariot, Philip and the eunuch. Philip has preached the gospel to him, he has believed the gospel and has evidently learned from Philip's preaching that a believer should be baptized. It is most likely that he had made no statement to Philip of his faith, but seeing the water as an opportunity to perform that which he had been taught, he asked the question, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Whereupon Philip replied, and the eunuch declared his faith.

In closing this brief discussion of the confession, may I say that any true believer in Christ is ready and glad to confess him as Lord from that time forward and considers such occasion as a privilege so long as he loves God with a love that causes him to seek God's glory first.

As we take up the study of this next division of our subject, "Faith working through love," may we do so fully conscious of the fact that Paul declared that "faith working through love" is the thing that avails, and may we also bear in mind that the consideration of this topic is of serious concern to us in seeking to know how to inherit eternal life. May we pursue the examination of it with the same care, earnestness and prayerfulness that we have

followed in the past, remembering that those who would inherit eternal life must love God and that those who love God will keep his commandments, will show that love by following his teaching. Our first and most basic question on the subject of baptism is, "Has God taught the people of the Christian dispensation, those who would become followers of Christ, to be baptized?" The question is not, "How should he be baptized?" nor "Why should he be baptized?" but "Has God taught that he should be baptized?" If God has not taught those who would be his people to be baptized, then it should not be a matter of any further concern of those who seek to inherit eternal life, but if God has taught those who would enter into life to be baptized, then it is God's commandment and those who love him will accept it and will be glad to follow it, whether all the whys and wherefores are clear to them or not.

Since there is no other safe source from which to seek the answer of this question, we turn to the revelation of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is to be found, of course, in the record of Jesus' life and teaching, and that of his apostles and those who worked with them. We learn that, "John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). We learn that Jesus was baptized of John in the fulfillment of righteousness (Matt. 3:13-16) and that God sanctioned it (Matt. 3:16-17). During Jesus' personal ministry in preparation for the kingdom of God which he proclaimed to be at hand, he preached repentance (Mark 1:15) and baptized his disciples (John

4:1-2). When Jesus had finished his period of preparation for the kingdom and had provided the final evidences of his divine sonship in his death, burial and resurrection from the dead, just before his ascension to the Father, we are told, "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). And on another occasion, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Jesus had promised to send the apostles the Holy Spirit, or "Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17) that should teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance what he had taught them (John 14:26). He instructed them to remain in Jerusalem until it came (Luke 24:46-49), and after that they should be his witnesses in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Acts 1:8). On the Day of Pentecost, soon after Jesus' ascension, the apostles received this power that was to guide them into all the truth and began to preach as Jesus had directed them. When people believed and asked what to do we are told, "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts



2:38), and also that, "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Did Jesus teach the apostles God's teaching and did the Holy Spirit guide the apostles in what they did and taught according to the truth? If so, then God has taught that man should be baptized and for the moment this is the only thing with which we are concerned. If this is God's commandment that believers be baptized, then this is a case of "faith working through love."

As the number of disciples increased rapidly there arose a great persecution and scattered them from Jerusalem. "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ" (Acts 8:5). "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed" (Acts 8:12-13). Philip preached the good tidings, or the gospel. The people believed and were baptized. Unless the teaching to be baptized was a part of the gospel, how did these people know that they should be baptized? If a part of the gospel, then it was God's teaching and another occasion of "faith working through love."

After his work in Samaria an angel of the Lord sent Philip upon another preaching mission (Acts 8:26) and the Spirit directed him to the chariot of an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29) who invited him to ride with him

and explain to him the scriptures (Acts 8:31). “And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (Acts 8:35-38). Can anyone doubt that Philip taught the eunuch that he should be baptized? And can anyone doubt that Philip, who was divinely guided upon this mission, taught the eunuch the right thing? The eunuch had shown his complete ignorance about the matter when he asked Philip to guide him. Surely this was God’s teaching and if so, we see again, “faith working through love.”

Saul of Tarsus seems to have become the leader in the persecution of Christians. He continued his, “Breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” until the Lord appeared to him in a vision on the way to Damascus. In relating what happened on this occasion, as he spake to the Jews from the castle stairs, Paul related this conversation between the Lord and himself, “And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do” (Acts 22:10). We are told that Saul was led into the city of Damascus after this conversation. From this instruction, evidently he expected to learn there what he was to do. What was that? It was not that he was to go to preach to the Gentiles and to

turn them from darkness to light for Paul declared in his speech before king Agrippa that the Lord told him this at the time of his vision (Acts 26:17-18). It was not the gospel which he was to preach to the Gentiles for he wrote to the Galatians, "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). In view of these statements, it appears that what was to be told Saul in Damascus had reference to personal acts. What he was to be told was evidently in answer to the question that he had asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" This question undoubtedly was the outcry of a soul convicted of sin as was the case when the people on the Day of Pentecost asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?" So what Saul was to learn in Damascus was what to do to adjust his own life.

After spending three days in Damascus without sight, and without food or drink and praying to God (Acts 9: 9, 11), Ananias was sent to him. Saul had been shown that Ananias would come and restore his sight (Acts 9: 12). Now when Ananias had come to Saul and given evidence that he was the right man by restoring Saul's sight, what did he tell Saul to do? "And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,

calling on his name” (Acts 22:14-16). The first two statements of this quotation merely reminded Saul of what the Lord had already told him. The last statement (verse 16) was personal instruction telling him what to do to remove his burden of sin that he might become a new creature and enter upon a new life. Here we see that Saul was told to do one thing—“be baptized.” The phrase, “calling on his name” indicates that which accompanies and is a part of true baptism. Baptism is not a hollow form. It is a very personal appeal to God through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall give more consideration to this later. Our question now is, “Has God taught the people of this dispensation that they should be baptized?”

After Jesus appeared to Saul on the way to Damascus, caused him to be blind, told him of the work that he was to do among the Gentiles, sent him into the city of Damascus, to be told what to do, had him wait three days without food or drink, showed him by vision and by miracle that Ananias was the one to tell him what to do, is it possible by any reasonable stretch of the imagination to think of Saul saying to Ananias, “Now I believe that you are the one that God sent to me to tell me what to do, and I understand that you are telling me to be baptized. I suppose it is all right and I am going to do it, but I do not believe it is necessary in order that my sins may be washed away. I do not believe it is essential to the forgiveness of my sins. Three days ago on the way to this city I saw my Lord in a vision. I believed on him and that very moment I was saved.” If Saul was saved

the very moment he believed, why did he spend three days in blindness, neither eating nor drinking, but praying? Had he learned of his terrible life of sin and that it had been forgiven, this surely would have been a time of great joy and not a period of fasting and prayer. We are told, "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened" (Acts 9:18). This shows that Saul believed what Ananias had told him to be God's commandment. Hence, in his obedience to it, we see his "faith working through love."

Next let us consider the case of Cornelius. God spoke to him in a vision saying, "Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (Acts 11:13-14). This Cornelius did and when Peter arrived at his house, Cornelius said to him, "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord" (Acts 10:33). Peter told him of the good tidings through the Lord Jesus Christ and, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word" (Acts 10:44). This seemed to be the final evidence to Peter that the Gentiles were to be accepted. This was implied by Peter's question which also indicated the means or manner by which they should be admitted to the blessings of God implying that this had been the special privilege of the believing Jews. "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as

we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:47-48).

In this brief account, we learn that Cornelius was told by Jehovah to send for Peter and hear words whereby he must be saved, that Cornelius told Peter when he came they were gathered to hear all things that had been commanded him of the Lord and the only thing in all the record in the form of a command was Peter’s command to them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then when the apostles and the Jewish brethren of Judaea contended with Peter about the matter, Peter raised the question, “Who was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17). In the light of these statements does the record leave grounds for any doubt of the fact that God through this inspired apostle on this occasion commanded that the Gentiles be baptized as he had on the Day of Pentecost through the same apostle commanded that the Jews be baptized? Or can anyone question the fact that the compliance of these people to this commandment, as is implied in the record, was anything other than the working of their faith through love. Furthermore, can anyone claim that receiving the Holy Spirit makes baptism unnecessary when these people were commanded to be baptized after they had received the Holy Spirit as did the apostles?

It is evident from the limited Bible record of the occasions when Paul told people what to do to enter into the blessings of the gospel that he passed on to them the commandment which had been given to him. One sabbath day when Paul was preaching to a group of women

by a riverside without the gate of Philippi, who had evidently met to worship God according to the law of Moses, we are told, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us" (Acts 16:14-15). We are told only two things about this woman's conversion. The Lord opened her heart to Paul's preaching and she was baptized. Under the circumstances, she must have learned about baptism from Paul's preaching and since the Lord opened her heart to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul, his teaching which she followed in being baptized must have been the teaching that God would have her give heed to; and since she was doing God's commandment, it was without doubt the manifestation of her love for God.

After Paul saved the Philippian jailor from his intended suicide, we are told of him, "And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling with fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:29-30). Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts 16:31). There are some people who seem to stop at this point in the record of this conversion and deal with this brief initial answer to the question as if it were the final answer, or as if it

included all that was said to the jailor about the matter. Then they interpret this answer to mean, "only believe." In dealing with the case after this manner a most important setting is overlooked and the latter part of the record is ignored. In reality, instead of being the most restricted answer possible, "a mere mental acceptance of Christ," it is the most complete and comprehensive answer that could be given in few words. Those who truly believe, have a living and active faith that works through love, will keep God's commandment. Hence, if the word "believe" is used without the designation of other specific commandments, it includes all of God's teaching to man and is equivalent to saying, "Take Jesus as your Lord and ruler and make his teaching your guide."

If we will bear in mind the person to whom Paul was speaking and the conditions under which he was speaking, it is easy to understand the reason he gave this answer which in reality was only the introductory statement of his answer. In the first place, the man who asked the question was a Roman who was living in a city where there were very few Jews for there was no Jewish synagogue, and apparently the only worship of the true God was that of a few women by a riverside outside of the city. Consequently, this man had no knowledge of Jehovah. It is also clear that the people of Philippi had an aversion to the Jews which would serve as a religious barrier. This is shown by their treatment of Paul and Silas. When they were dragged into the market place before the magistrates, the charge against them was, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,



and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans" (Acts 16:20-21). We are also told, "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods" (Acts 16:22). In the second place, the man who asked this question had had no opportunity to hear the gospel. This was the first time the gospel had been preached in the whole province of Macedonia so far as we have record. It had been preached unto the women outside of the city. The prisoners had listened to Paul and Silas praying and singing (nothing is said of preaching) but the jailor was asleep. In the third place, the man who asked this question has just been aroused from his sleep by an earthquake to find his prison doors open, to think his prisoners had escaped and to draw his own sword to kill himself but has been saved from this tragic fate by the calm assurance of the apostle Paul, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16:28). He has called for lights and trembling for fear has fallen down before Paul and Silas and brought them out and asked his question. To such a person, completely ignorant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, under such circumstances, it is not only natural but necessary that he be given a short, comprehensive and consoling answer. But had Paul stopped at this point where some people seem inclined to stop, what would his answer have meant to the Philippian jailor? He would have been like the blind man whom the Lord healed without identifying himself and to whom he later put the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" (John 9:35-36). Faith is not produced by commandment but by evidence.

Now what more did Paul and Silas say to the Philippian jailor to make this answer intelligible? We are told, "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house" (Acts 16:32). Without any doubt this means that they preached the gospel to him and all that were in his house. Surely this included the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, not only the basic evidence that he was the Christ, but the manifestation of God's love for man which would lead through godly sorrow to repentance, but he must have taught this man, who was completely ignorant of the teaching of Christ, something more for we are told, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately" (Acts 16:33). Now how did he know that he should be baptized if that teaching was not included in the word of the Lord which Paul and Silas spake unto them? Since it was included in the word of the Lord then, the teaching to the people of this dispensation to be baptized must be a part of God's teaching.

After Paul had been driven out of the synagogue in Corinth, the record says, "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). This statement shows that the preaching which Paul did in Corinth to those people who had never heard the gospel included teaching that they should be baptized and they were.

When Paul went to Ephesus on his second visit, he found certain disciples there of whom he asked, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 19:2). When Paul learned that they had been baptized "into John's baptism," he explained the matter to them. "And when they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). There is no room to doubt that these people believed in Jesus for this was a part of John's teaching and although they had been baptized with John's baptism which was the baptism of repentance, under Paul's teaching they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul must have taught them thus to do.

We have considered every case of conversion of which we have any detailed record in the New Testament. Besides these we have the record of the appeal made by Peter to the people in Solomon's porch. It was as follows: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). This is the only record of any occasion where any of the apostles gave people instruction on what to do that they might enjoy the blessings through Christ where the record does not state either that they were told to be baptized or that they were baptized. Here the word "baptized" is not used but its meaning could be very well included in the phrase, "and turn again." And since this same speaker taught the people on the Day of Pentecost, as well as on all other occasions of which we have

record, to be baptized, there can be no doubt that this was his teaching to the people in Solomon's porch. Since it is true that every record of conversion has given evidence of teaching on baptism, it is not surprising to read Paul's statement to the Corinthians, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). Who were "we all" that were baptized into one body? They were all who believed on Jesus and accepted him as Lord, all who had become Christians.

Have we considered enough of the Bible record to give a safe answer to the question, "Has God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, taught the people of this generation who want to inherit eternal life to be baptized?" We have seen that Jesus himself was baptized and that he baptized his disciples. We have learned that he taught his apostles that they should make disciples and baptize them. It is clear that when the apostles began their preaching on the Day of Pentecost, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that they taught the believers to be baptized and they understood the teaching and were baptized. We have also found that Philip, who had accepted this teaching and was full of the Holy Spirit, taught the people of Samaria to be baptized. They understood the teaching and were baptized. He also, under divine guidance, taught the Ethiopian eunuch who understood that he should be baptized and was baptized. On the way to Damascus, to Saul of Tarsus was revealed his terrible sin and he was told to go into Damascus to learn

what he must do to adjust the matter. Ananias, a special messenger from Jehovah, was sent to him. The only thing he was told to do was to be baptized, calling upon the name of the Lord. Thus Saul understood and was baptized to wash away his sins. Cornelius was directed by Jehovah to send for Peter. Peter was divinely shown that he should go, and having been divinely shown at the house of Cornelius that the Gentiles should be received into the grace of God, Peter commanded those who believed on the Lord Jesus to be baptized. It appears that they understood his teaching and gladly followed his instruction. When Lydia heard Paul's preaching at Philippi, the Lord opened her heart and with this understanding she was baptized according to the teaching. When Paul spoke the word of the Lord unto the Philippian jailor, he and all his house believed, understood the matter and were baptized. The disciples of John the Baptist whom Paul found at Ephesus who had been baptized by John learned the teaching from Paul more fully and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. In fact, in every case of conversion of which we have record in the New Testament where we have any detailed description of the matter, it is clear that the early disciples were all baptized as Paul declared to the Corinthians, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13).

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON 18

1. Why should people confess Jesus as the Christ?
2. Give Bible evidences that man is commanded to confess Jesus to be the Christ.
3. Give reasoning to show that confession could not come before faith?
4. This is another evidence that what teaching is not true?
5. Show by scripture that confession is not a single act.
6. Why is it not out of order to have a confession before baptism?
7. Should a confession be demanded before baptism?
8. How long will one be glad to confess Jesus as Lord?
9. What two facts already established by Bible teaching should be remembered in our study of our next topic?
10. What is the most basic question about baptism? Why?
11. What is said about baptism in the work of John the Baptist and Jesus' early work?
12. What instruction did Jesus give his apostles in regard to baptism?
13. What precaution was made to guard the teaching of the apostles?
14. Guided by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost what did Peter tell the people to do and what did they do?
15. If God commands people to be baptized, then of what is doing so an example?
16. Why should we think that Philip taught the people of Samaria to be baptized?
17. On what grounds do we believe that a part of the gospel preached to the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip was the teaching to be baptized?
18. Why do we think that Saul expected to learn in Damascus what to do to adjust his personal life?
19. What did Ananias tell Saul to do?
20. Point out evidences that Saul was not saved the very moment he believed.
21. What shows that Saul believed the teaching to be baptized was God's commandment.
22. What did Peter command the people who received the word at the house of Cornelius to do?
23. Give evidences that this must have been God's commandment.
24. What are we told about Lydia's conversion?

25. Why was she baptized?
26. What was Paul's brief initial answer to the Philippian jailor's question, "What must I do to be saved?"
27. What results when one considers this Paul's complete answer to the question?
28. In reality what did this answer include?
29. Give the setting that shows the need for such an answer.
30. If Paul had stopped at this point the jailor's status would have been like whose?
31. What more did Paul and Silas speak to the jailor and his house and what must it have included?
32. What indicates the fact that Paul taught the Corinthians to be baptized?
33. What did the certain disciples at Ephesus who had been baptized of John's baptism hear that caused them to be baptized again?
34. Whom did Paul tell the Corinthians were baptized into one body?
35. Summarize the evidence that God, through Christ, taught people to be baptized.

## LESSON 19

### FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE (Continued)

Now that the fact has been established beyond question for everyone who is willing to accept the teaching of the Bible that God has commanded the people of this generation who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be baptized, we shall turn to the question of why. This is the question that is commonly asked by some of the people of this generation. Frequently it arises from the same source and implies the same attitude as it did when it first began to be used in childhood. When mother's instruction was too clear to be misunderstood but called for doing something that we did not want to do, we sought to justify our disinclination by asking, "Why do I have to do that?" Since the Bible so plainly and so repeatedly sets forth the teaching that God would have man be baptized, it is evident that the question, "Why must I be baptized?" may some time originate in the individual's aversion to doing what God wants him to do. Such aversion in one who proposes to love God is certainly inexplicable, if it is not due to some powerful blinding influence within the individual's own system of thought. It is frequently observed that a person rejects an idea that is correct and is clear and simple because it conflicts with one that he already holds and which has become an established part of his thinking. This is



probably the explanation of this case. There is such an idea accepted by thousands of religious people with which the Bible teaching on baptism conflicts and for that reason, it is rejected. I refer to the doctrine that people are saved by believing that Jesus is the Son of God rather than by a faith that honors God by working through love. This doctrine is out of harmony with the basic teaching of the New Testament and consequently where this idea of faith dominates one's thinking he is unconsciously blinded to much of the teaching of the New Testament, including the teaching on baptism.

Reader, if you hold this erroneous idea about faith, I pray that you may recognize the danger of your situation and I beg you to re-study carefully the preceding lessons on faith, along with your Bible, that your blindness may be removed and that your heart may be opened to the truth. Until this blindness is removed and you cease to attribute this mysterious power to faith and see it as a means through which God's word becomes operative in the life of man through the law of man's nature which was divinely established in the beginning, you will be unable to understand a very vital portion of the Bible teaching on how to inherit eternal life. If you believe that a man is saved by virtue of the fact that he has a mere mental conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God then your question, "Why should I be baptized?" is unconsciously a matter of mere mental defense and you are unlikely to find an acceptable answer. However, if you are not thus blinded and the question expresses an honest desire for the truth, it can be answered to

your full satisfaction.

The answer to this question that I state first is to be found in the very nature of the gospel and has been implied throughout this whole discussion. You should be baptized because you love God. For if you love God, you will keep his commandments and one of his commandments is that you be baptized. In other words, because you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the manifestation of God's love for man, you are impelled to love God and want to keep his commandments. Your faith works through love. Thus, anyone who is moved by the power of the gospel has no occasion for reflecting upon the wisdom of God by asking, "Why must I be baptized?" This probably accounts for the fact that the apostles and early disciples always taught the people to whom they preached that they should be baptized. Only on three occasions is any mention made of the immediate effects of one's obedience in accepting the gospel. These statements provide us with the second reason why people should be baptized.

The three occasions and statements referred to are as follows: On the Day of Pentecost when the people who had been convicted of crucifying their Lord asked the apostles, "What shall we do? Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). While preaching in Solomon's porch, Peter charged the people, "But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and

killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 3:14-15), and urged them, “Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3: 19). When Ananias went to Saul of Tarsus in Damascus who was in the depth of despair having been charged of persecuting the Lord by Jesus himself, he exhorted him, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22: 16). It is easy to observe that these three cases have a very definite common element. In each case the people concerned have been charged with, or convicted of, a terrible sin and were in need of special assurance that their sin would be “remitted” or “blotted out” or “washed away.” What were they told to do to accomplish this? “Repent and be baptized.” Would repentance alone accomplish it? No. Would baptism alone accomplish it? No. Why? Because only part of the teaching has been followed in either case. Then why was Saul not told to repent? Because he had already repented. This was indicated by his fasting and prayer. If one who has not accepted the Lord Jesus Christ wants his sins forgiven, he must repent and be baptized in his name. Then our second answer to the question, “Why should I be baptized?” is that your sins may be remitted, blotted out, washed away, removed or forgiven for it is God’s instruction to those who believe to be baptized as well as to repent.

Some one may object to this reason for being baptized on the ground that if man receives forgiveness of sins

through his own activity or obedience, he is earning his salvation instead of being saved by the grace of God through faith. Such an objection is likely due to the fact that proper differentiation has not been made between “the works of the law” and “the works of faith.” In doing the works of the law man was trusting in his own ability but in doing the works of faith he is trusting in the power and promise of God. As we shall see in the discussion of the next reason why you ought to be baptized, there is no saving power in water but a baptism in water which through faith is a calling upon the name of the Lord is “faith working through love.” It is the obedience of faith,” or faith obeying the truth. Herein lies the efficacy of baptism. Obedience to the truth does not make one’s faith void but rather makes it perfect (Jas. 2:22) and it is this faith that is made complete through obedience that purifies man’s soul. Peter gave testimony of this in his epistle, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently” (I Pet. 1:22). These people had not purified their souls through believing the truth only but through their obeying the truth. What truth had Peter given them to obey? Without doubt, it was the same as he had taught the people on the Day of Pentecost as he was still guided by the same Spirit. “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Note also that the Holy Spirit was not to be received until they had obeyed the truth.

The third reason why you ought to be baptized is to be found in the true meaning of baptism and the place that God has given it in the Christian system of salvation by faith. There are some people who believe they are saved merely because they do believe and, hence, have rejected baptism as having any vital part in the salvation of man, who have seized upon Ananias statement to Saul of Tarsus as the foundation for a rationalization that will justify their action. They give the instruction to, "Be baptized and wash away thy sins," a literal interpretation then discredit it by the rationalization implied in the question, "How can water wash away sins?" Such a handling of the matter misrepresents and belittles the New Testament teaching on baptism. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any implication that any kind of water applied to the body of man by any means or method of application can in and of itself cleanse him of sin. Man is not cleansed by water in baptism but by the power of God through the act of faith in baptism ("faith working through love" is the thing that avails). In fact, this is exactly what Ananias was teaching Saul. If we read his complete instruction, it is clear enough. He said, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." "Calling on his name," certainly indicates that his sins were not to be removed by the water but by the Lord upon whom he called through this act of faith in his name.

In writing to the Christians in Asia Minor, the apostle Peter shows the meaning of baptism and the place it has in the gospel plan of salvation by a comparison with the

saving of Noah from the wicked world of his day. "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 3:18-21). Peter first declared that Noah and his family were saved through water. He next declared that in a similar manner water saves now (in the Christian dispensation) and to indicate under what condition he adds, "even baptism." It is obvious that Peter is saying that these people were saved through the same agent as was Noah's family, and that agent was water. It is certain, however, Peter did not mean to say that Noah's family was saved by means of water in and of itself. For if this were true, then all of the other people of that day would have been saved for all had the same water, but according to the record, Noah was saved by water, the others were destroyed by the same water.

Wherein lies the difference? Since Noah was not saved by water in and of itself, what caused the water to become effective in saving Noah? The writer of Hebrews provides us with the answer to this question. "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen

as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11:7). From this we see that the water became an effective saving agent through Noah's faith. It was an active, a working faith, a faith that would keep God's commandments concerning things which were contrary to all expectation. So far as Noah's experience indicated, there had never been such a flood in the history of man. There were no grounds on which to expect such, other than faith in God—"A conviction of things not seen." They were commandments that required months of labor in things that undoubtedly appeared foolish to those without faith in God, and people with less faith probably would have reasoned that it was unnecessary. But of Noah it was said, "According to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22).

Not only does the verse from Hebrews quoted above show that by faith Noah, "prepared an ark to the saving of his house," thus making the water effective in saving him and his family, but it also shows that by doing so he, "became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Even though Noah was a preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5), and walked with God before the flood (Gen. 6:9), he became "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" by preparing the ark, or through the obedience of his faith.

Now what did Peter mean by telling the people to whom he wrote that as Noah was saved through water so did water save them? Certainly he did not mean that

the power of their salvation was in the water. As was true in the case of Noah, water was the agent, and as Noah caused the agent to become effective by making the preparation which God had commanded through faith, so do the people of this dispensation make water effective in saving them by making the preparation which God has commanded—repenting and calling on his name. In other words, the power is not in the water but in the wholehearted response to God's teaching through faith. This Peter declared in these words, "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The word translated "interrogation" in this quotation has also been translated "inquiry," "appeal," "demand," etc. Regardless of which word is used, it indicates man's response toward God through the power of the gospel.

There is one other point of comparison between our salvation through water and that of Noah. From what was Noah saved by water? It was not from his immediate personal destruction for that was accomplished by the ark. So far as that was concerned, the water was a destructive agent, but it was the means of saving him from the wickedness of the antediluvian world. Thus the water of baptism today is not the agent that cleanses man from his sins but the agent which God has chosen to use to separate man from the wickedness of the world that his sins may be blotted out through faith in Christ's blood (Rom. 3:25). Hence, the appropriateness of the expression, "But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross



of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). "That we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (I Pet. 2:24). "Because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (II Cor. 5:14-15). This is in keeping with Peter's appeal to the people on the Day of Pentecost. After telling them to repent and be baptized, the record says, "And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:40-41). Thus, in being baptized they were saving themselves from this crooked generation and pledging themselves to live unto Christ.

Maybe these thoughts will help us to understand Paul's statement to Titus about how we are saved. "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7). We have just been describing the washing of regeneration through which, according to God's own plan, we have been made heirs. We have not earned it by our works of righteousness, but we have accepted God's plan and through faith in him have been

separated from the world and become new creatures through the renewing of the Holy Spirit. In this we have the fulfillment of Jesus' declaration to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). This is one birth. It includes two elements—water and spirit. It takes both to comply with Jesus' statement or to make the one birth complete and without this birth we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Of this change, Paul says, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). To the Galatians, he said, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). From these statements it is evident that by baptism people are not only saved from the wickedness of the world but are born into the family of God. Those who have been baptized according to God's teaching are members of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27) and sons of God. One may object that Paul said, "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." That is true, but in the very next sentence (Gal. 3:27) Paul pointed to the fact that they were baptized into Christ as evidence of his statement which simply means that through faith in Christ Jesus they had accepted God's teaching to be separated from the world through the water of baptism having been begotten by the word of God and regenerated through the Holy Spirit. In these statements we have the third reason why people should be baptized. Briefly, because it

is God's own plan for separating them from the wickedness of the world and making them his children, heirs of eternal life.

Now that it has been made clear that God has commanded the people of this dispensation to be baptized and shown that because you love God you should be baptized unto the remission of your sins to be saved from the wickedness of the world and to become a child of God, may I plead with you that you not follow the example of the Pharisees and lawyers in the days of John the Baptist. "But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30). If these people rejected the counsel of God by refusing to be baptized of John, surely the people who refused to be baptized as taught through Jesus and the apostles are rejecting for themselves the counsel of God today. This you cannot afford to do, for in rejecting it you are refusing to agree with God that his teaching is good or to justify his plan. Follow the example of the people and the publicans in the days of John. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:29). They accepted God's teaching through John and were baptized with the baptism of John.

In an effort to show baptism to be unnecessary some people have found an analogy with circumcision. They reason that since Abraham's faith was reckoned for righteousness before he was circumcised, the faith of the sinner today, apart from obedience, is reckoned for right-

eousness and, therefore, he is saved before he is baptized. Since such reasoning would separate baptism completely from the salvation of man, the people who hold this doctrine consider baptism a mere ordinance of church membership which may or may not be accepted by those who believe in God and whom they consider saved. This idea, however, that baptism is an ordinance of church membership fails to find any support whatever in the New Testament teaching. In the records of conversions there is not one word said about church membership. No instruction whatever is given in terms of becoming a member of the church. No invitation is given to anyone to become a member of the church. Those who believed the gospel were told what to do to have their sins forgiven, remitted or washed away; how to become a child of God, but never how to become a member of the church. When one has been redeemed and purified, he is called out of the world and therefore a member of the "called-out" assembly or the church. There is no ordinance of church membership. There is not one thing more for him to do or that he can do in the matter of becoming a member of the church. Furthermore, the Bible is very plain in telling us that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:39). How can we believe that it is not for the remission of sins but an ordinance of church membership and still believe the Bible?

In further support of this doctrine some have proposed another analogy from Paul's teaching based upon the fact that Abraham's faith which he had while in uncircumcision was reckoned for righteousness. Since Paul uses

the case to show that the faith of Gentiles that were never circumcised was reckoned for righteousness even though they never became a part of the Jewish people or Jewish church, they reason that church membership is unnecessary today and consequently baptism which is the initiation into church membership is unnecessary. If this analogy were sound, this conclusion would be correct, but since the analogy is false, the conclusion is incorrect. The one vital point that is overlooked in this comparison is the fact that God's teaching on circumcision was given only to the descendents of Abraham, the Jews, and those who became part of the Jewish household and were circumcised. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:13). But God's teaching today through Christ is to every man. Every believer is commanded to be baptized. The more correct analogy with circumcision would be that as every male Jew who received the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham must be circumcised or he had broken the covenant and would be cast out, so should those who believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, that seek the blessings of his covenant become his people by being baptized as all believers are taught to do. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48). If a Jew whom God taught

to be circumcised lost his share in the blessings under the covenant made with Abraham when he refused it, why should we believe that people who claim to believe in Christ can reject his teaching to be baptized and still share in the blessings under the covenant given through Christ? How can those who reject the counsel of God by rejecting baptism rightfully consider that God will not reject them? (Luke 7:30).

Reader, for the sake of your own soul and the souls of those whom you love, I beg you to stop and consider the matter and remember that we show that we love God by keeping "his" commandments. If you do what God wants you to do, you love God but if you do what you want to do, you love yourself. If you do what God wants done the way he wants you to do it, you love God, but if you do what God wants done the way you want to do it, you love yourself. If you will, you can look at what you are doing and the way you are doing it and know whether you love God or yourself.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 19

1. What may be implied by the question, "Why must I be baptized?"
2. Why does one frequently reject an idea that is correct and clear?
3. What might cause such to happen in this case?
4. Under what condition is such a question a mental defense and what result may be expected?
5. What is the first answer to the question, "Why must I be baptized?"
6. What three occasions provide the second answer to this question?

7. What is our second answer to this question?
8. What distinction has one evidently failed to make if he considers being baptized earning the inheritance?
9. Wherein lies the efficacy of baptism?
10. How did Peter tell the people to whom he wrote that they had purified their souls?
11. What truth had Peter given them to obey?
12. Where is the third reason you ought to be baptized to be found?
13. What rationalization has been used to belittle the Bible teaching on baptism?
14. What has never cleansed man's sins?
15. How is one cleansed in baptism?
16. What makes it evident that Noah was not saved by water in and of itself?
17. Why or how was Noah saved by water?
18. How did Noah become an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith?
19. Show that water becomes effective in baptism to save man now just as it did in Noah's case.
20. In reality what is baptism?
21. From what was Noah saved by water?
22. From what are we saved by water?
23. How does Paul describe this to Titus that shows this to be new birth?
24. Show from Paul's statements to the Corinthians and Galatians that this is the way one enters the new relationship with God.
25. What is the third reason one should be baptized?
26. Give Bible teaching from which it may be reasonably inferred that refusing baptism is rejecting the counsel of God.
27. Show that the analogy with circumcision to show baptism unnecessary is false.

## LESSON 20

### FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE (Continued)

Now that we have seen that the Bible teaches that in order to inherit eternal life one must love God, that if he loves God he will obey God's commandments and that one of God's commandments is to be baptized, the question of how to be baptized is in order. This is in order especially since the religious world teaches and practices three forms or modes of baptism. Now if all three modes have been taught or practiced by the apostles and other inspired teachers of their day without distinction then either one will surely be acceptable today. But if God has shown by instruction or examples the way he would have people to be baptized then we have no choice in the matter. If we love him, we will be careful to honor his word by doing it his way. Our love for God is shown just as much by doing a thing the way he wants it done as by doing the thing that he wants done.

It is difficult to understand why there is so much confusion in the religious world over the question of how to be baptized. It has probably been influenced some by the practices followed in the Jewish religion or by man's desire to improve upon the beauty of the rite or its convenience, especially in the practice of infant baptism. However, it is more likely that the various practices have become accepted, or established, by an appeal to the technical translations of the Greek word, "baptidzo."



This word has been given three meanings, "sprinkle," "pour," and "dip" or "immerse" but they seem to have been taken from the definitions of "baptize" in our English dictionaries and not from translations given in Greek lexicons for they agree that "baptidzo" means "dip" or "immerse." Since dictionaries follow the practice of defining words in terms of present day usage these meanings merely reflect the variety or religious practices and not the original meaning of the Greek word "baptidzo." Through our dictionaries these three uses of the word were supplied, so the various groups of religious people have adopted the ones that support their respective religious ideas with little or no consideration for one of the most fundamental principles of translation or interpretation. If a word is capable of a number of translations or interpretations, the one adopted must be determined by the context in which the word is used. Since this principle has been largely superseded by an appeal to language without recognizing the fact that the real problem involved is not so much a matter of exact Greek translation of words as it is one of contextual interpretation, the proponents of the respective modes of baptism have found statements from some reputable Greek scholars which they think support their ideas, or they have concluded that scholarship supports all three translations. Since circumstances apparently make it impossible to establish the exact meaning of the word "baptism," or "baptize," to the satisfaction of all through the language structure, we shall examine the text of the New Testament for evidence of the meaning that the word was intended

to convey. These evidences shall be drawn from three classes of source material. First, we shall consider all conditions, circumstances and remarks that are found in the record of the occasions when baptism was administered that in any way imply the mode of baptism employed. Next, we shall consider statements made in the New Testament about baptism that supply information relative to the nature of the act. Last, we shall consider the act of baptism from the standpoint of what it represents.

Of all the records of the administration of baptism in the New Testament, there are only four that provide any information that in any way imply the mode of administration. The reason for John baptizing at a certain place was stated in these words: "And John also was baptizing in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized" (John 3:23). Of John's baptizing, it is also said, "And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:6). In Mark's record the baptism of Jesus is described thus, "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him" (Mark 1:9-10). The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch is described in these words: "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both

went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39). In instructing Saul of Tarsus to be baptized, Ananias referred to it by the figurative expression, "And wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). In all four of these cases there is the definite implication that the amount of water used was much in excess of what would be needed for either sprinkling or pouring. This suggests that the act was immersion. If not, why would much water in AEnon be a reason for baptizing there? Why was Jesus baptized in the Jordan and came up out of, or from, the water? Why did the eunuch who was on a journey go down into the water and after being baptized come up out of the water? And why did Ananias characterize Saul's baptism by the phrase, "Washing away sins," which suggests at least sufficient water for a bath, if the mode of administration was either sprinkling or pouring as some practice it today? Not only is immersion implied in each of these four cases, but also there is a complete lack of mention of any condition, circumstance or remark in any of the records of cases of baptism that implies that the form followed was either sprinkling or pouring.

Paul made statements both to the Colossians and to the Romans about baptism that definitely indicate the character of the act that was performed. In referring to the baptism of the Colossians he said, "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with

him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). To the Romans he wrote, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). Here Paul makes a comprehensive statement. "All we who were baptized . . . we were buried." Surely these statements could not be applied to the act of sprinkling or pouring. So without question, the act of baptism as practiced by the apostle Paul and others of his day was that of immersion. This statement included all who were baptized. Therefore, none were baptized by sprinkling or pouring.

We have learned in an earlier part of our discussion that it is through the act of baptism in its completeness that one is saved and separated from the wickedness of the world and is translated into the kingdom of God. This change is very fittingly represented by a death, a burial and a resurrection—a death or separation from sin; a burial, an unmistakable evidence of a death; a resurrection, a new life by the power of another, hence, a new relationship with new obligations. The quotations in the preceding paragraph not only show that the act of baptism symbolizes a death, a burial and a resurrection, but also that it is in vital relationship to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Paul stated that "we are buried therefore with him through baptism unto death," and "ye are also raised with him through faith in the working

of God.” Without this faith in the working of God, baptism is a mere meaningless form, but through a true faith in the working of God as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ this pantomiming of the great basic evidences of the gospel—Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-3)—most appropriately expresses “the answer of a good conscience toward God.”

May I ask you to weigh these matters carefully and answer these questions for yourself. Which, and only which, mode of baptism bears any resemblance to a death, burial and resurrection? Why would our God give us a meaningless ritual, sprinkling or pouring, when immersion so beautifully symbolizes man’s dying unto sin and being made alive unto God? If you have failed to see any significance in baptism (immersion), may I ask what initiatory act you would suggest as being more appropriate or more meaningful? If you have ever thought of immersion as a humiliating experience, it is very apparent that you were not thinking of it from the point of view of one who is truly penitent. The truly penitent person is truly humble, in which case no occasion of obedience is humiliating. Humiliation is born of pride and is an unquestionable indication of lack of humility. Furthermore, it is a sure sign that one has not denied himself that he might wholeheartedly give glory to another, but he has merely been aroused by the warning of the gospel and rationally moved in the interest of self-preservation without coming to any personal realization of God’s love or being affected by its transforming influence. He is not a child of God for he does not partake of his nature.

Does it not appear to you to be rather strange that the people of this generation have so much difficulty understanding the Bible teaching on baptism when the early disciples found no difficulty in the matter? Have you observed the fact that none of the New Testament writers ever found it necessary to make a detailed discussion of baptism? This evidently indicates that the teaching on baptism was accepted and that no difficulty arose over the matter. For if such had been the case, surely Paul would have dealt with it in the same forceful manner in which he did the matter of the resurrection, the Lord's Supper, circumcision, and other questions that troubled the early Christians. This lack of any such discussion of the matter could not have indicated that Paul considered baptism unimportant since he pointed to baptism as the evidence that the Galatians were sons of God, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27); and as evidence that the Romans should not continue in sin, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are you ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:1-3); and declared that "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body". Reader, if the teaching of the apostles on baptism was plain enough for the people of that day to accept it universally without disagreement or dissension, why should it not be clear to the people of the present day? It is difficult to believe

that the people of today have less intelligence than they had, and it is very evident that the people now have more education than did they. Can our education be the source of our difficulty? Have people become so sophisticated that they cannot be content to accept the gospel in its simplicity? Have people become blinded by their own conceitedness and hardened by their own pride? Paul shows this to be possible in his letter to the Corinthians. Read I Corinthians 1:18-31 and see what you think about the matter. And if you do not believe that the Bible teaches those who would inherit eternal life to be baptized by immersion in water, I beg you to re-study the matter. You can surely understand what the early Christians understood and surely an all-wise God who has loved you and has given you the intelligence that you have has given instruction that you can understand and expects you to do so.

In our study of that which accomplishes, or avails, in the matter of inheriting eternal life we have concerned ourselves mainly with God's teachings on how to become purified and reconciled to God. This has been done to stress the fact that faith through which man is saved always works through love and that "faith working through love avails." I am told that some people do not want you to teach this doctrine. If so, this is regrettable. Can people love the truth and not want you to teach the truth? Or would one propose to say that anything that has been so plainly shown to be God's commandments, that was evidently taught by Jesus himself and also his apostles, is not a part of the truth? And how would one

ever be sure that he was right in accepting one part of the truth and rejecting another part? What is the cause of such a behavior? Why will one who is honest and in earnest in his desire to inherit eternal life confidently and enthusiastically practice some of the Bible teaching to this generation and deny some of it? How can one confess Jesus as Lord and deny part of what he says?

This last question is a very important one but I cannot discuss it fully at this time.\* However, I shall attempt to describe a demonstration in the hope of shedding some light on the matter.

Please think of yourself as one of a group of people seated in a classroom and think of me as standing before the group. The group is made up of people who have expressed faith in me. I hold up my hand in which is concealed a small object and proceed to ask the following questions. "If I were to tell you that I have a house and lot in my hand, would you believe it?" Of course, all answer, "No." "If I were to tell you that I had a full-sized automobile in my hand, would you believe it?" The reply again is, "No." "If I were to tell you that I hold a standard encyclopedia in my hand, would you believe it?" Again the answer is, "No." Then I ask, "If I were to say that I hold a Webster's dictionary with 18,000 words and definitions in my hand, would you believe it?" Again the common answer is, "No," upon which I open my hand and present the group with the book as described. Now why did those people who be-

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\*For further discussion see, "Why Do People Not See the Bible Alike?"



lieved in me say that they would refuse to accept my statement that I had such a book in my hand. It was because the preceding questions had led them to think in standard sizes of objects and on that basis such a book would have been too large to be enclosed in my hand. Or to state the matter another way, in terms of their present mental content my statement was unreasonable and consequently was rejected as being true. This is one of the greatest weaknesses of what we call faith today. It is ruled over and limited by human reason. It is a refusal to accept the source of instruction as being infallible and therefore accepting all teaching from that source as being true without the need of measuring it by one's own wisdom. This is the mistake that Eve made in the Garden of Eden. Instead of accepting God at his word, she proposed to weigh the matter and act upon her own decision. If we have a real faith in Jesus, we believe what he said without having to evaluate each statement by our own reasoning. That is faith in ourselves, not faith in God's teaching through Christ.

In order that we may have a Bible description of the cause of such behavior let us recall the case of the apostle Peter when he was first told about Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. When this was made known, even though Peter had recently confessed Christ saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), we are told, "And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee" (Matt. 16:22). Although Peter's confession gives recognition to an infallible source, he here rejects

Jesus' statement on the basis of his own reasoning. Whereupon Jesus turned to him and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). Here we have Jesus' own statement of Peter's difficulty. He was not accepting Jesus' statement of that which came from God, but he was acting upon the ideas which he held that came from men. This is Jesus' description of the person who confesses him to be the Christ but rejects part of his teaching because he is basing his action upon "the things of men." He is limiting his faith by his judgment based in human ideas. Such a faith is quite different from that which was reckoned for righteousness. It is a far cry from the faith of Abraham as it is described in the word of God. And Jesus certainly sounded a very grave warning against one's trusting in such by addressing Peter with the term, "Satan." Friend can you risk such a state of affairs?

It has been my purpose in discussing, "Faith working through love" to show that this is universally true. Wherever there is a true faith in God, it works through the love that a believer has for God. Since love always seeks to comply with the wishes of the one loved, he who loves God seeks to comply with his every wish or teaching regardless of what that teaching is. Since so many people have limited the application of this principle to the field of Christian living, I have given major emphasis to its application to Jesus' teaching in one of the fields where it has been most neglected, that of being born into the family of God. For if one has not become

a rightful member of God's family, he has no claim to the right of inheritance. There are two other fields of God's teaching in which people have refused or failed to apply this principle. I refer to God's teaching with respect to worship and with respect to church management or government. Space does not permit an extensive discussion of these areas at the present. I shall use only one illustration to show what I consider a safe application of this principle in these fields of activity as well as elsewhere.

If there is any field of Christian activity where care should be exercised in doing what God wants done and in the manner in which he wants it done, surely it is in the activity of worship. Acts of worship are the acts through which we give the most direct expression of our personal attitude toward God. It certainly would be ironical for one who loves God to fail to follow God's instruction in regard to acts of devotion, to fail to comply with God's wishes in man's most personal expression of his love for God, when one can only show love for God by keeping his commandments. In view of this and the very nature of the teaching, I know of no teaching that better illustrates the need for careful application of this principle than the New Testament teaching on singing God's praises.

The most complete statements of instruction on how to worship God in song are those made to the Ephesians and the Colossians, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19) and

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16). Besides these there is a brief instruction in James 5:13, and a few other statements relative to the practice in I Corinthians 14:15, Romans 15:9, and Hebrews 2:12. I judge everyone is acquainted with the fact that the major difference of interpretation of this teaching relative to worship in song is on the question of instrumental accompaniment, some holding to the idea that worship in song may be accompanied with mechanical instruments and others that such should not be done. I also judge that any honest individual whose religion has been a thing of importance to him has studied the matter for himself and has learned that the only semblance of Bible support for the practice of using mechanical instruments to accompany the singing of God’s praises is wholly dependent upon a technicality of language translation. The practice of making a special interpretation of scripture based upon a language nicety is fraught with grave danger. This is due to the fact that the Greek words of the New Testament were used with the same freedom found in word usage in all languages. Therefore, a translation forged from derivational niceties in the use of words may be far from the idea being expressed by the writer. This was illustrated in the latter part of lesson six by the New Testament usage of the Greek words, “ogapao” and “phileo.” Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that the language of the New Testament was the language of the common

people which suggests the likelihood of even less rigid conformity to the rules of language usage than that found in classical Greek.

While it is not my intention to enter into any extensive discussion of the technicalities of the New Testament translation, it might not be out of order to call attention to the fact that the verb translated, "sing" used in the statements from Ephesians and Colossians is not the word "psallo" over which there has been so much argument, but it is another word altogether. It is a form of the "ado" or "aeido" and is always translated "sing" with no implication of the use of an accompaniment. In the statement in the Ephesian letter a form of "psallo" is used as a verb, but it is used to describe what takes place in the heart and is translated, "making melody." It is true that a noun form derived from the word "psallo" is used in each of these statements to designate one kind of song to be used but it is generally understood to be speaking of the Hebrew psalms.

What reason is there for believing that no mechanical instrument should be used to accompany God's praises? In the first place, the fact that all the translations of the Bible, so far as I have had opportunity to inspect, describe the activity to be engaged in as "singing" with never a mention of any accompaniment even implied. In the second place, and further supporting these translations, there appears to be no reason to doubt that the early disciples never used a musical accompaniment in their worship to God. There is no support to the contrary from the outstanding historians of the early church but

rather the concensus seems to be that the early disciples did not use instrumental music in worship but it was brought into the worship at a much later date. If the apostles who were guided by the Holy Spirit did not practice it, evidently they did not teach it. In the third place, the Orthodox Greek church, which is composed of people who from language background were probably better qualified to understand the New Testament Greek than any others, has never used instrumental music in its worship.

But someone objects to omitting the instrument because it makes the worship much more attractive and surely we want to give the gospel every aid we can in order to reach more people. It makes the worship much more attractive to whom? Whom are we proposing to please in our worship? Why should one think that melody produced upon a mechanical instrument is more pleasing to God than the "personalized" melody made with the heart which he requested? Why should the effect of the mighty vibrations of the pipe organ have a greater spiritual effect upon the hearts of the hearers than the personal feeling expressed in unaccompanied vocal music? Or, how does an accompaniment aid in "speaking one to another" or "teaching and admonishing one another" which is one of the stated purposes of song service? Is it not a hindrance instead? Is it the power of music, or the power of the gospel that is "the power of God unto salvation"? And after all, who will propose to say that vocal music alone is not pleasing to God? One may reply that it is foolish to continue to use vocal music

when we can have such beautiful instrumental accompaniment. Maybe it is but did you ever read, "But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are" (I Cor. 1:27-29). Maybe it just appears foolish to you. If you had a better understanding of God's purpose, it might not appear so. And how about the possibility that this addition to song worship might be a case of man glorying in his own wisdom, especially since the instrument always grows as the congregation increases in wealth. Is our worship to be an entertainment for men, or a praise to God? But after all has been said about the beauty of music produced by using the instruments that man has made, it must be admitted that such has never surpassed in beauty the music that can come from the trained human voice, the instrument that God made, if the individual will only make the effort to train it. If men want beautiful music, why not learn to use God's instrument that can so efficiently echo the melody that is in man's heart?

As I close the discussion of this topic, I do so with a prayer that what I have tried to say will not be misunderstood, that the great truth expressed by Paul has not been obscured by my making application of it in areas in which it seems to have been overlooked. As I have suggested before, this has been done to emphasize the fact that

the teaching must be applied universally. The thing that avails in our relationship with God is “faith working through love.” Wherever there is real faith, there is love and wherever there is love, faith works, and wherever faith works—the faith that is reckoned for righteousness—it works through love and wherever faith works through love, it honestly and prayerfully follows God’s commandments and this includes all of God’s commandments whether they pertain to becoming a Christian, living a Christian among one’s fellows, worshipping God or spreading the gospel, it is true wherever faith works. I beg you to accept this great Bible teaching and apply it in your life regardless of the mistakes I may have made in the presentation of it.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 20

1. Under what condition would it be all right to use either of the three modes of baptism?
2. What has probably caused the most of the confusion on baptism?
3. When a word is capable of several translations how must its meaning be determined?
4. From what sources will the proper meaning of the word be determined?
5. What is the implication from occasions of administration in the record?
6. What is shown by statements that show the character of the act of baptism?
7. What is represented in baptism and which mode only will represent it?
8. Only when can baptism (immersion) be considered humiliating?
9. What about the Bible indicates that the people of the days of the apostles had no trouble understanding that people should be baptized and how?



10. If they understood why can we not understand?
11. Why is it regrettable that some people do not want one to preach this doctrine?
12. How is our faith often limited and how was this illustrated?
13. Tell of Peter's difficulty apparently of the same character and the cause of it.
14. What has been the purpose in the treatment of the topic "Faith Working Through Love" and why is it given a selective treatment?
15. In what field of Christian activity does it appear that one should especially try to do what God wants done and the way he wants it done? Why?
16. In what lies the only semblance of Bible support to the using of mechanical instruments of music in worship?
17. What Greek word is not used in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 that is translated "sing"? And what does the word used always mean?
18. How is "psallo" used in these verses?
19. What reasons are there for believing that no instrument was used?
20. Whom should we seek to make the worship please?
21. In what may a mechanical instrument be a hindrance to its purpose?
22. Give a quotation that should warn against following human improvement?
23. What might aid our decision on this question?
24. Where must this principle be applied if we would inherit eternal life?

## LESSON 21

### CAN ONE LOSE HIS RIGHT OF INHERITANCE?

By the question in this title I simply mean can a person who has become a member of God's family, and consequently has become an heir of God, live in such a manner as to lose his right of inheritance and fail to inherit eternal life? The popular form of this question is: "Can man fall from grace? Can an individual who has come into such a relationship with God that he has received the blessings of God's grace and is in a saved condition having been cleansed from his past sins, turn away from God and live so as to come short of eternal salvation through grace?" Please note that our question is not, "Will man fall from grace?" or "Is man likely to fall from grace?" but "Can he fall; is he able to fall; is it possible for him to fall from grace?" In a matter where man would incur the loss of eternal life, a possibility indicates sufficient danger that it should be guarded against. If it is possible, then man should know the truth about the matter. This question has been answered by men both affirmatively and negatively. Some say, "Yes," and others say, "No." But how does the Bible answer it? That is the answer that people who are in earnest want.

Since grace means favor, we may restate the question thus: "Can one who has gained a place in the favor of

God lose that place?" May we first observe that in the beginning Adam, who is spoken of as the son of God (Luke 3:38), certainly stood in the favor, or grace, of God, but through his disobedience he was cast out of the Garden of Eden having lost his place of close association with God. Let us also recall that the descendents of Abraham were given a special place in the favor, or grace, of God to whom this covenant was sealed through the act of circumcision individually, which favor, or grace, was lost through their disobedience. Their place of favor, as well as its loss, was declared by Jesus in these words, "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:11-12). Later Paul makes use of this experience of the Jews as a warning to the Christians at Rome in this figurative presentation. "Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:19-20). Two things are evident from this statement. The people to whom Paul was writing, in contrast to the Jews that fell and suffered God's severity, were in God's goodness or

God's grace; and, second, if they failed to continue in his goodness, they would be cut off. In other words, that if through unbelief they fell from God's grace they would be, in that final day, cast forth into outer darkness as Jesus said would be the case of the Jews who continued in unbelief. These things certainly suggest that the answer to the question, "Can man fall from grace?" is "Yes." But before taking this as final, let us make a careful and extensive examination of the New Testament teaching which bears on this subject.

The Christians of the churches of Galatia were being sorely tempted to accept circumcision, evidently being taught that they could not be saved without circumcision and apparently some were being influenced by the teaching. In writing to these people, Paul first declared that such teaching was a perversion of the gospel which he had preached unto them. He next gave evidence that what he had preached was the gospel which he received directly from God. Then he showed that his gospel did not include circumcision and the keeping of the law by showing its relationship to the law and to the promise that had been made to Abraham. As a final warning he gives to them a very terse description of the status of any among them who accepted circumcision. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:2-4).

These statements from Paul leave no doubt that people could fall from grace during the first century of Christianity and there is little reason to believe that the power or influence which binds one to Christ is any more effective today than it was then. Surely the apostle Paul did not postulate a hypothetical case which could not happen as a warning to these people about whom he was so gravely concerned. Furthermore, why would Paul be so concerned about these people if they could not fall from grace and be lost? And certainly if they could not, Paul was acquainted with the fact and surely no one could read the Galatian letter with reasonable care and think for a moment that these people to whom Paul addresses these statements have not been in the grace of God. How could they fall from grace if they had never been in grace? Or, how could they be severed from Christ if they had never been joined to Christ? But this implied evidence of their relationship to God and the Lord Jesus Christ is not all. In this same letter Paul declared to them, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3: 26-29). How could they all be sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus and heirs according to the promise having put on Christ and not be in the grace or favor of God? Paul also said to them, "And because ye are sons, God

sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (Gal. 4:6-7). Here Paul points to the fact that God had sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts as evidence that they are sons of God and to their being sons as evidence that they are heirs through God. Is it possible for this to be without their being in the grace, or favor, of God? Paul also makes it clear that it was evident to the Galatians themselves that they had received the Spirit and also how they received the Spirit for he asked, "This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). Paul expressed their relationship to God still another way. "Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods: but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again?" (Gal. 4:8-9). What could be the meaning of their knowing God, or being known by God, if it does not indicate that they were in God's favor or God's grace?

I am humbly aware of the fact that the people who teach that a man cannot fall from grace point to one's falling as evidence of the fact that he was never in the grace of God, but what is the source of such an idea? Where does the Bible make any such statement, or a statement that will even support such an idea? It is certainly in conflict with Paul's teaching to the Galatians. Paul certainly would never have said, "For freedom did

Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1), if those people had not been set free by Christ through the grace of God, or if it were impossible for them to become “entangled again in a yoke of bondage.”

If these people could not fall from grace and eventually be lost, why was Paul so anxious about them. He said, “My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you—but I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my tone; for I am perplexed about you” (Gal. 4:19-20). What did he mean by saying, “I am again in travail,” if he did not mean to suggest that their present condition was a serious matter as was the occasion of their being born into Christ? And why did Paul say to them, “I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain” (Gal. 4:11), if there was no danger of their being lost after having become sons of God and receiving the Spirit through the gospel of his grace. Surely if these people were going to be saved in the end, Paul could never have considered his labor upon them to be in vain or to be worthless.

Some of those who teach that a Christian cannot fall from grace attempt to set aside the weight of Paul’s statement to the Galatians about falling from grace by making a strict application of the wording used in the King James translation, “Whosoever of you are justified by the law,” and declaring that, “No man is justified by the law” (Gal. 3:11) and then drawing the conclusion that the passage cannot mean that a true believer has, or

can, fall from grace. Since both of these statements are in the same letter addressed to the same people, this sort of reasoning appears to be a very sad reflection upon the apostle Paul's effort to save these people from receiving circumcision and being severed from Christ. If this were true, it would be a most glaring case of inconsistency and a complete nullification of the climax of Paul's reasoning with reference to their accepting circumcision.

It is also in order to notice just here that although Paul's main line of reasoning in the major part of his epistle to the Galatians and his statement about falling from grace were applied directly to the matter of receiving circumcision in an effort to be justified by the law, there are other statements in the Galatian letter that indicate that one can fall from grace and lose his inheritance in some way other than receiving circumcision. In reality, the exceeding sinfulness of their accepting circumcision lay in the fact that they had lost faith in Christ as their Saviour and were seeking to be justified by the law and in so doing had done despite unto the Spirit of grace. It is this lack of faith in Christ, lack of confidence in his promise, lack of willingness, even joy in following his teaching in honoring him as Lord by a sincere effort to live for him that will cause one to lose the eternal inheritance which is provided for man through the grace of God. This Paul does not fail to make known to these people in the latter part of his letter. After reminding them of the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, and exhorting them to walk by the Spirit, he warned them



of the gravity of their failure in these words: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). From this it is clear that those who had become sons of God could fail to inherit the kingdom of God by turning away from Jesus' teaching to practice these things. If these people, all of whom Paul declared to be sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26) and indicated that they had received the Spirit (Gal. 3:2), could not fall from grace why did Paul admonish them to walk by the Spirit, remind them of the struggle between the Spirit and the flesh and warn them against the works of the flesh with the declaration that those who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God? If they were in no danger or if it were impossible for them to do such, why this teaching? And how could these practices cause them to fail to inherit the kingdom of God without causing them to fall from the grace of God through which the eternal inheritance is provided? And why would Paul warn them, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:7-8), if the matter were not of most vital concern to them?

It is true that in the Galatian letter is the only place where we find the exact expression, "fallen away from grace," but there is much teaching in other New Testament epistles of the same truth. Since much confusion and division has been caused by erroneous teaching on the subject, it appears advisable that other Bible teaching be presented in order that those who seek Bible instruction on the matter may do their own thinking, arrive at their own conclusions and be able to give a reason for their answer.

We now turn to the epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle is the greatest treatise on faith that has ever been written. It is a bit unfortunate that the eleventh chapter of the epistle has been emphasized so much as the great chapter on faith that many people have overlooked the fact that the book of Hebrews is a great book on faith, of which chapter eleven may be considered the climax. The epistle is not addressed to any particular people, but the very nature of its content leaves no doubt that it was written to the Hebrews. This is evident from a mere casual reading of the book. Upon a more careful reading, it is easily seen that the epistle was written to Hebrew Christians for the express purpose of strengthening their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, fortifying them against the efforts of Judaizing teachers and warning them of the terrifying results of apostasy. As one would expect, it is expressed in terms of Hebrew life and religion. The evidence of the Sonship of Christ and the divine nature of his teaching was drawn from the Hebrew scriptures. The terrible consequences of unbelief were graphically

depicted in the failure of the Hebrew nation, and the glories of a victorious faith were portrayed through the lives of individuals of all dispensations as revealed in Hebrew literature. To those who will acquaint themselves with Hebrew history, law and religion as revealed in the Old Testament, this epistle makes a very strong appeal for an active, growing faith and provides a very graphic warning against the danger of apostasy resulting from indifference, neglect, or failure to grow. And even those who are without the Old Testament background, who will read the letter through carefully and mark the special appeals and warnings that are made therein, cannot fail to discover that the major purpose of the epistle is to encourage the Hebrews to press on in their spiritual growth unto the stature of a fullgrown man by warning them of the grave danger of failing and pointing to the triumph of a living faith, to their past accomplishments and to the Lord's promise not to leave them.

Now let us review some of the appeals and warnings which show the main purpose of the Hebrew letter to be to prevent the Hebrew Christians from falling from grace. After exalting the Son through whom God has spoken unto us, at the beginning of chapter two we have the exhortation, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed

unto us by them that heard" (Heb. 2:1-3). This statement shows that they had accepted the teaching that was spoken through the Lord and on the basis of the great salvation which it affords, they are warned against neglect. The next appeal is that they consider Jesus in his faithfulness as Apostle and High Priest. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house" (Heb. 3:1-2). This statement also makes it clear that these people had not only accepted the Lord's teaching but that it had become effective in bringing them into the great salvation as they are described as "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling."

The next warning was, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:12-14). Here the Hebrews were taught to guard themselves and each other against being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, finally resulting in unbelief and in falling away from the living God. Here we have the very definite implication that true believers can become unbelievers. For these people could not fall away from the living God if they were not with him or in his favor, or grace, and surely those who were in the grace of God

were at one time true believers in him. And it is just as certain that the writer of Hebrews would not have given those people this warning if this falling away could not happen. In the further discussion of the destruction of the people who were brought out Egypt because of their unbelief these exhortations are added: "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1); "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11); "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14).

In the last paragraph of the fifth chapter, the Hebrews were reminded of the fact that they had not grown as they should, that they were still babes. Then in the first part of the sixth chapter of the book they were exhorted, "Let us press on unto perfection," and were given this reason for doing so, "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6). In this statement the writer makes it crystal clear that he is not talking about people falling away who had only been nominal Christians or those to whom Christianity had had no meaning but of those who were

evidently standing in the grace of God. And having already warned against falling away from the living God, here he merely describes the situation and then states the terrible condition of those to whom this happens. "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance" because they have depreciated the Christ so much by voiding his influence in their lives that there is no power in the gospel to produce in them godly sorrow to work repentance.

After having established the validity of Jesus' priesthood, the efficacy of the blood of Jesus in taking away sin through which was dedicated a new and living way that they had accepted in Christ and pointing out their great high priest over the house of God, they were exhorted, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Heb. 10:22-25). Then the reason for such an exhortation was given in these words, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27). This is evidently a reiteration of the warning that was given in chapter six. The

meaning is this: If those who had once known the way of righteousness as described in chapter six had become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin described in chapter three and had become such people in their own nature as would wilfully or willingly engage in sin, to them there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin because the only sacrifice for sin—Jesus Christ—had become meaningless and ineffective.

After speaking some other words of encouragement and briefly recounting the victories of faith by those who had gone before, the writer gave the exhortation, “Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2). What is “the sin which doth so easily beset us”? Without question it is the sin that the whole Hebrew letter is warning against—the sin of unbelief. It is the sin that will separate one from the grace of God. It is that which closes the door to God’s grace. It is that which nullifies the whole influence of the gospel. As Paul told the Roman people, “We have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand” (Rom. 5:2). So when faith has been replaced by unbelief and thus nullified the influence of the gospel that once held the people in the way of righteousness, one has not only fallen from grace but under these conditions has no more access to the grace of God.

We should also recall the fact that faith is not only the means through which the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation," becomes effective with man, but it is also the means through which God's power to keep people unto eternal salvation is effective with man. This was stated by the apostle Peter. "Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:5). From these statements we should understand that a true faith in God, "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), a working faith as illustrated by the lives of the men in chapter eleven, is man's means of access or entrance into the grace of God, but when our faith has become unbelief and our obedience has become disobedience, we have fallen from grace.

Surely this is enough from the epistle to the Hebrews to show that the principal purpose for which it was written was to help prevent their falling from grace and surely there would have been no occasion for writing such an epistle if it were impossible for the Hebrews to fall from grace.

We shall next examine Paul's teaching "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae" (Col. 1:2). First, let us observe that the people to whom the letter was addressed were undoubtedly in the grace of God. They are addressed as "saints," "faithful brethren in Christ." They are further described, "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of



his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him" (Col. 1:19-22). And also, "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (Col. 2:12-13). These statements make it clear that the Father had reconciled them to himself through Christ to present them holy, without blemish and unreprouable, having raised them from their burial in baptism "through faith in the working of God."

Having seen that these people were in the grace of God, Paul's warnings to them certainly show that they could fall from grace. "This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech" (Col. 2:4). "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with

the increase of God" (Col. 2:18-19). Why did Paul strive for them (Col. 2:1) and why was he concerned that they not be deluded by men's speech, that they not be made spoil of or made a prey through men's philosophy, and that they not be robbed or made to lose their prize by worshipping angels, if there were no danger, or even possibility, of their doing such? Furthermore, in speaking of their being reconciled to God, to be presented holy and without blemish, Paul showed that this was conditioned upon their not being moved away from the hope of the gospel. "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister" (Col. 1:22-23). To be moved away from the hope of the gospel was to be moved away from grace, for it was through grace that the hope was provided. And why would Paul have warned against being moved away from such a hope if it could not be done? In this quotation a way they could fall from grace is implied. You will note that Paul said that they were reconciled to be presented holy and without blemish, and unreprouable "if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast." This, continuing in the faith, is what would keep them from being moved away from the hope of the gospel, but if they fail to continue they will be moved away. Hence, the real danger with the Colossians was allowing faith to

be replaced with unbelief as was true with the Hebrews.

Although we have no record where Peter ever used the expression, "fallen from grace," he certainly taught the people to whom he wrote his two epistles that those who had been redeemed through the Lord Jesus Christ by the grace of God and had been purified by his blood could turn back from the holy commandment and being overcome be in a condition that was worse than their state before they accepted the truth. Peter was writing "to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:1), who had been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an incorruptible inheritance, and were guarded by the power of God through faith (I Pet. 1:3-5), who had been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ and through him were believers in God, and who had purified their souls in their obedience to the truth (I Pet. 1:18-22). Surely such people were in the grace of God but Peter warned them, "And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (I Pet. 1:17-19). Surely this was to remind them of the fact that their having been redeemed through the blood of Christ did not forever seal for them the place of children of God

and heirs through Christ. But if they would retain that place and call upon God as Father, they should spend their time here in an earnest effort to live a life pleasing to God, "who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work."

"And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Pet. 2:2). Peter warns those who might be overcome by such influence, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire" (II Pet. 2:20-22). Note that these who were overcome had escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of Christ, or the gospel, by the grace of God having purified their souls in their obedience to the truth but they allowed themselves to be turned away from the truth by the teaching of error. After giving many other exhortations and warnings, Peter closed his second epistle with these words, "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen" (II Pet. 3:17-18). In this statement there can be no doubt that Peter was warning all of the people to whom he was writing to beware of being carried away with the error of the wicked, to beware of falling from their own steadfastness, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. This admonition is very similar to that which was given by the writer of Hebrews in chapter six, that these people who are in the grace of God grow in that grace lest they be carried away by the error of the wicked and fall and become even as those described earlier that had been overcome whose last state is become worse than their first.

Paul warned the Thessalonian Christians against this same danger. After referring to the anxiety that he and those with him had for the people of Thessalonica lest they be moved by the affliction that they were suffering, Paul wrote, "For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain" (I Thess. 3:5). This statement certainly implies that those people who were standing in the grace of God might be tempted to turn away from him and do so and cause Paul's labor with them to be lost. But how could Paul's labor be lost if because of his labor they were in the grace of God and could not fall from that grace? But were these people in the grace of God? If not, what did Paul mean by these statements? "And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message,

even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober" (I Thess. 5:4-6). And if you would like further evidence, read I Thessalonians 1:2-10.

From this array of scriptures it is easily seen that man not only can fall from grace, but that men have fallen from grace and that there is a grave danger of man falling from grace today if he does not guard himself from the pitfalls of life by keeping the power of God through the gospel effective in his life through an active faith and a growing love for God and man. Since falling from grace is a real danger to many people who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and who evidently have been accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ, it appears that something more should be said about why people can fall from grace and how they do fall from grace.

In the first place we should recognize that the grace of God is not some mysterious arbitrary power which comes into a person's life and controls it or in some way mysteriously works it out regardless of his individuality or wishes in the matter. The grace of God is simply the favor of God that is extended to man through the Lord Jesus Christ providing for him a way of life if he will truly humble himself before God and accept it. But unless he can be brought to recognize his own littleness, sin-

fulness and inability, seeing that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps and deny himself the rule of his own life submitting to the guidance of God's wisdom as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel, he has no share in the grace of God. To put the matter another way, his sharing in the grace of God depends upon him. If he is to receive the blessings, he must receive the gospel; he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul asks, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14). He is thus brought into the grace of God by God's power through the gospel which becomes effective with everyone who believes. Man not only has access to the grace of God by faith (Rom. 5:2) that works through love, but he is also maintained, or guarded, by faith (I Pet. 1:5) that works through love. Herein lies the basic reason why man can fall from grace. His continuing in the grace of God is dependent upon the same means by which he entered into the grace of God. God is no more responsible for maintaining man in his grace than he is for bringing man into his grace. Both are dependent upon man's attitude toward God. God has provided the power for each through the gospel. If man will open his heart to the gospel to believe it, through its power he will be led into the grace of God. If he will guard his heart against the influences of this world by maintaining a living, active faith in God, he will continue in the grace of God being guarded through faith unto eternal salvation. Hence, man's falling from grace is no reflection upon the power of God, or it is not due to any failure

on the part of God but rather to man's failure to maintain a vital contact with the power of God making it effective in his own life.

To put the matter another way. Whether or not one falls from grace depends upon what he believes and what he loves. This is also the case in his accepting the gospel. If man allows himself to believe that the things of this world are of too great value to him, coming to love them too much, he is led to put them first in his life and they become his god. The result of such is stated by Paul in these words, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (II Cor. 4: 3-4). Jesus pointed out this inhibiting influence by his question to the Jews, "How can you believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (John 5:44). Love for the things of this world is a love for oneself and is the only thing that can keep a man out of heaven. It will not only keep him from being attracted by the gospel of Christ but it will turn him away from it after he has honestly accepted it. When one is neglectful of spiritual things, allowing them to become less meaningful and less vital, material things being more real become more alluring until a waning faith ceases to give realism to spiritual values and the joy once experienced has been supplanted by fleshly satisfactions. When this happens the faith that should guard one unto eternal salvation has been lost and consequently he has fallen from grace.



This discussion has no intention of giving the impression that there is not sufficient power in the gospel to keep one from falling from grace. God has provided all of the power we need to preserve us and guard us unto the eternal salvation if we will give the gospel through which it is provided the place with us that we should, keeping our faith alive and active. If the facts and promises of the gospel continue as realities with us, the things of this world will not have the influence to turn us away from God. Hence, one who has a real faith in God is not likely to fall from grace but a faith that is genuine may become weakened and permit one to be turned away from God and lose his eternal inheritance. Sometimes the attraction of the things around us becomes very great. May God bless our efforts to live unto him who died for us that our faith may not fail.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 21

1. State the question more fully.
2. What does "grace" mean?
3. Of whom do we have record in the Old Testament who lost their place in God's favor?
4. Give testimony of the fact that the Jews lost their place in the favor of God and state how.
5. State two things that Paul shows to be true about the Romans.
6. How did Paul describe the status of the Galatians with respect to grace?
7. Give reasoning to show that he must have been talking about something that could happen or had happened.
8. Give evidence that the Galatians were in the grace of God.
9. From what source comes the idea that if one falls from grace he was never in grace?
10. What does Paul's anxiety suggest about the matter?

11. What reasoning is sometimes used to show that the Galatians could not fall from grace?
12. Show that such would be a reflection upon Paul.
13. Show that one may fall from grace other than by accepting circumcision.
14. What overemphasis has probably caused the epistles to the Hebrews to be misunderstood?
15. What was the purpose in writing Hebrews?
16. List some of the warnings given in the first five chapters of Hebrews.
17. In the sixth chapter what reason was given for pressing on to perfection?
18. What does this description show about people who might fall away?
19. What reason did the writer of Hebrews give in chapter ten for their exhorting one another?
20. What is the sin that does so easily beset us?
21. What is the power through which a man is guarded unto salvation?
22. Under what condition would there have been no occasion for writing the Hebrew letter?
23. Give evidence that the Colossians were in the grace of God.
24. Give statements from the letter that show that they could fall.
25. Give evidence that the people to whom Peter wrote were in the grace of God.
26. Give warnings that certainly imply that they could fall from grace.
27. What warnings did Paul give the Thessalonians that imply their danger of falling?
28. Give evidence that the Thessalonians were in the grace of God.
29. These teachings not only show that man has and can fall from grace but what more?
30. What is the grace of God and what is it not?
31. Upon what does continuing in the grace of God depend?
32. Explain the statement whether one falls from grace depends upon what he believes and what he loves.

## LESSON 22

### WHO WILL INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?

In the preceding lessons an earnest and prayerful effort has been made to present the Bible teaching on, "How to Inherit Eternal Life." Due to the importance of eternal life to you, the existing confusion resulting from myriads of conflicting ideas, the ease with which men have been and are being deceived, the human tendency to be satisfied with your present answer to the question and the fallibility of the one presenting these lessons, you have been warned repeatedly to employ every reasonable precaution lest you be blinded to the truth and fail in your religious efforts. You have not only been encouraged to re-examine the ideas that you hold, regardless of how long you have had them, but to weigh carefully any, or every, idea that you accept. In our consideration of this question of "Who will inherit eternal life?" we are following through on the procedure recommended.

The correct answer to the question, "Who will inherit eternal life?" provides us with the acid test of the soundness of the entire preceding discussion. Surely the proof of the method or means of accomplishing anything is to be found in the end result. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Unfortunately some people have been influenced unconsciously by their wishful thinking and

have adopted as their answer to this question the counterpart of their accepted religious ideas and overlooked the answer that Jesus has given us. Let us examine Jesus' answer carefully.

Jesus' answer was given only a few days before his crucifixion (Matt. 26:2). As will be easily observed, it is not stated in extensive detail but is very dramatically set forth. It is one of the few times that our Saviour draws aside the curtain to allow us a glimpse of the life beyond the grave. He makes his answer objectively realistic by giving a brief description of the judgment scene. "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto

you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:31-46).

This is an action picture. Jesus shall come in his glory and as King he shall separate the peoples of the earth into two great groups. To one he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the other he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The latter shall go away into eternal punishment and the former into eternal life. The part that concerns us most, however at the present is the reason behind the action. Why will some go away into punishment and others into life?

What reason did Jesus give that those on the right side of the judgment seat will be invited to inherit the kingdom? "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was

thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matt. 25:35-36). This is Jesus’ answer to the question, “Who will inherit eternal life?” Is it in keeping with your expectation? Does it describe the person that you are trying to be? Does it high-light the activity that is paramount in your life? Are you making sure that this can be said about you? Surely this is enough to make it unmistakably clear to anyone who would understand, that Christianity is not a mere form of religion but a manner of life. That it is not merely a matter of believing certain things but of living a certain way.

For clarity and emphasis let us compare Jesus’ answer with some of the answers that would be given by various groups of religious people of today, judging from their controlling religious ideas. Jesus did not say, as would be expected by some, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for you have never done anything very bad. You have not lived a life of wickedness and debauchery. You have never killed anybody nor committed adultery. You have never stolen, nor lied, nor gotten drunk. You have never been filled with envy and jealousy and caused strife and divisions among my people.” No, Jesus did not invite them because of what they had not done, but because of what they had done. He said, “For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick,

and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matt. 25:35-36). Christianity is not a negative thing.

Jesus did not say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for ye listened to my teaching and truly believed that I was the Son of the living God. Your faith was unwavering in its steadfastness. Ye gladly confessed me before men and were always ready to make confession to my holy name.” No, Jesus did not say they would inherit the kingdom because they had believed on him and confessed him as Lord, but rather, “For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matt. 25:35-36).

Jesus did not say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for when ye learned of God’s goodness and of your sinfulness ye were filled with godly sorrow which brought you to repentance. Ye died to your sins, turning away from all that which was displeasing to my Father, and in order to be cleansed you were buried in the watery grave of baptism and raised with a determined resolve to live a new life that would honor and glorify God.” No, Jesus did not state that they were to inherit eternal life because they had repented and been baptized, but, “I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matt. 25:35-36).

Jesus did not say to those on the right side of the judgment seat, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for ye were members of the true church which I built and ye were always in attendance, when not providentially hindered, when my people came together to worship. Ye always offered your sacrifice of praise with joy and lifted your heart in fervent prayers unto the throne of God's grace. Ye truly remembered me and my sacrificial love when ye partook of the bread and the cup, personally experiencing a reinvigorated love and a renewed determination to be faithful to me as your Lord." No, Jesus did not say they would be called to receive the eternal inheritance because of their earnest, wholehearted participation in worship, but the reason he expressed was, "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35-36).

Jesus did not say that he will say in that day, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for ye studied and learned my teaching. Ye could quote it fluently in teaching others. Ye were never ashamed of it but were always bold to proclaim it. Ye not only found joy in teaching others the way of life by your personal effort but you helped to provide means to support others in the preaching of the gospel and extending the influence of my people." No, Jesus did not say that the blessings



of eternal life would be given to them because of their zeal for his word, or their liberality in supporting his cause, but that the King would say, "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35-36).

But when and how had all of these people fed and clothed and visited Jesus for the most of them had never seen him? Of this Jesus left no doubt for he said, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). The reason given to the people on the right side of the judgment seat for their being called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world may be restated directly in terms of the Christian's present-day activities and relationships. The resulting description is simply this: those who will inherit the kingdom are those who come under the true influence of his teaching and minister unto the needs of his brethren, the children of God, thus manifesting the true mark of discipleship—"love one for another." Furthermore, it should be observed that this service to others would not result from a conscious effort to qualify for the inheritance but rather would be a natural result of his spirit which dwelt within them. This is indicated by the fact that these people would not be aware that they had ministered unto him. Thus, it is clear that these people were to receive the inheritance because of what they were as

indicated by these acts done under these circumstances. Their engaging in these practices without doing so through a conscious effort to do good or to comply with God's teaching for the purpose of personal favor or advantage shows them to be people who are led by the spirit of Christ, whose hearts are filled with the love of God, who partake of his nature and whose compassion is touched by a brother's need. It is evident and certainly not surprising that shortly before his crucifixion Jesus took occasion to teach his disciples what was the true nature of Christianity. This he did with the greatest possible teaching emphasis. He not only presented the scene of its final test, but also in a most dramatic form demonstrated what would be necessary in order to obtain the eternal inheritance. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." This leaves no doubt that the true test of Christianity is love among brethren. This redoubles the emphasis that should be placed upon lessons three and four of this series entitled, "You Must Love Man."

Does the fact that Jesus expressed the basis of man's final judgment in terms of his love for the brethren imply that loving the brethren is all of Christianity, or that it is

the most important part of Christianity? Certainly not, but it is the most comprehensive objective measure of Christianity. We should remember, however, that this is true only when it is the natural product of one's own thoughts and feelings, when it is the expression of one's own nature that is begotten of God, or God's spirit abiding in him. John points to this as evidence that we are begotten of God. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7); that God abideth in us, "No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (I John 4:12); and that he hath given us of his Spirit, "Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:13). John also declares, "Whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1); and, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (I John 4:20). John also said, "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17). From these quotations we see the interrelationship between the love of God and the love of the brethren and consequently the comprehensive nature of Jesus' statement, "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35-36).

One other quotation. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:2-3). Although love of the brethren has been shown to be the crucial test of Christianity since it is rooted in and dependent upon our love for God, it also comprehends obedience to all of God's commandments as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ as love would do them. From this, it is clear that the people of this dispensation to whom the King will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," will be those who have not only loved each other but have loved God and have shown their love through an honest effort to keep his commandments. Although it was not specifically mentioned in Jesus' description of the people on the right side of the judgment seat, we know they have not been murderers, adulterers, fornicators, etc., for God's teaching against such is too plain (Gal. 5:19-21). Although Jesus made no mention of these people's faith and confession of his name, we know that they did believe and they did confess because Jesus taught them to believe and to confess him (John 8:24; Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10). These people who went away into eternal life had repented and had been baptized even though Jesus made no mention of the fact. How do we know? We know that they had been taught to do this (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; Acts 10:48) and we know that they loved God and those who love God will keep his commandments. Al-

though Jesus said not one word about church membership, attendance, or worship, we know that these people who were addressed as “ye blessed of my Father,” came together and worshipped God in public as well as worshipping him in private, seeking always to give honor to his name because they were taught to do these things (Eph. 5:19; I Thess. 5:17; I Cor. 11:23-26). Jesus did not say that these people had studied his word, had taught it to their fellows or had financially supported the work and spread of the gospel but we know they did because they loved God and those who love God keep his commandments and they were taught to do these things (Acts 20:32; Heb. 5:12; II Cor. 9:7).

Jesus redoubled his emphasis upon this lesson in his statement to those who would not inherit eternal life, to those on the left side of the judgment seat. To these will be said, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). The reason given for this terrible judgment and denunciation is expressed in the same terms as those employed in stating the reason for inviting the righteous into their eternal inheritance, but with a negative meaning. The reason given is simply a statement that these people had failed to love the children of God rather than an enumeration of the wicked things that they had done. “For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matt. 25:42-43). It is also impressively significant that no extensive list

of the activities in which they failed is given but rather a few closely related personal practices which testify to the fact that they do not have a true Christian love one for another indicating that God abideth in them and has given them of his Spirit (I John 4:12-13). To fail in this is to fail completely for he that hath not his Spirit is none of his (Rom. 8:9). We must love the brethren.

Jesus did not say that the King will say to those on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels for ye have been atheists, infidels and skeptics. Ye have denied the God of heaven. Ye have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Ye have spurned his mercy and continued in your own conceitedness." No, he will say, "For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matt. 25:42-43). Jesus did not say that the King will say in that day, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels for ye have been fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and such like," but that he will say, "For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matt. 25:42-43). Jesus did not say that the King will say, "Depart from me ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels for ye have been filled with enmity and jealousy, and have caused strife,

factions, divisions, and parties among my people.” No, he will say, “For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matt. 25:42-43). Jesus did not say that the King will say to those on his left hand in that day, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels for ye refused to repent, or ye rejected my teaching on baptism, or ye ignored my teaching in matters of worship, or ye were half-hearted and indifferent and negligent with respect to Bible study, worship and Christian living.” No, the King will say, “For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matt. 25:42-43).

When had these people failed to minister unto Jesus? The answer was given in these words, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me” (Matt. 25:45). Then why will these people be consigned to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels? Why will they go away into eternal punishment? It is not because of the terrible things they have done. Neither is it because they have left many things undone, but rather because of their very nature. It is because they are the kind of people that they are. It is because they have not become new creatures. They have not given the gospel that place in their hearts and lives that would provide such trans-

forming power to fill them with the love of God and the Spirit of Christ. They have not been led by the Spirit of God and consequently have not partaken of his nature and become his sons (Rom. 8:14), for had this been true, they would have loved God's people. "Who-soever loveth him that beget loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

Although no mention is made of atheists, infidels, or skeptics in pronouncing judgment upon the people at the left side of the judgment seat, we know that they will be a part of the multitude because they have refused to honor God's word or to be influenced by the gospel thus rejecting the power of God unto salvation. Not one word is said about fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, revilers, extortioners and such like but we know that these characters will be among them, for all people are to be separated into two groups and we know such cannot be among those who are invited into the eternal inheritance. "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10). In telling why these people were being banished from the presence of God, not one word was uttered in regard to any participation in enmities,



strifes, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions and parties but we know that the people who engaged in such are among those that will be instructed to depart for such cannot inherit the kingdom of God. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). In Jesus' explanation of the failure of these people to inherit eternal life he makes no reference whatever to their failure to repent, to confess his name, or to be baptized, to follow his instruction in worship, to be regular and enthusiastic in attendance, or to be diligent and faithful in the study of his word, but there is every reason to believe that those who failed in these things fail in their love for God for no man can love God with all of his heart, with all of his soul, with all his strength and with all of his mind and refuse or neglect to follow his teaching or his wishes in the matter. We should never forget that implicit obedience to God's instruction is not merely one of the ways to show our love for God, it is the only way.

I regret to say that there are too many people who propose to follow the Lord Jesus Christ who do not like to be confronted with this kind of teaching and who have invented all sorts of rationalizations in an effort to nullify its effectiveness. The sad thing about it is that they have so completely deceived themselves that in

all good conscience they zealously pursue the course of their own religion. "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). Reader, if you have any such disposition, I beg you not to overlook the warning that came from the lips of our blessed Lord. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23). And may I call to your attention the fact that this warning is given in terms of the final judgment scene and leaves no doubt that confessing Jesus as Lord and pursuing a religion in his name does not make people his people, but rather his people are those who do the will of his Father in heaven and they will be received in the judgment. To many people the question which our Lord asked while he was among his disciples is still in order. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Space does not permit the discussion of all of these rationalizations for they are legion. I shall mention only two or three for illustrative purposes. Probably one of the most frequent statements made in justification of religious differences goes something like this: "Everybody cannot see the Bible alike." This statement implies that man cannot understand the Bible, and, therefore, he

is justified in following his own misunderstanding of the truth so long as he is sincere in the matter, so long as he believes what he believes to be right and makes an effort to practice it. May I state this reasoning a little more fully that we may examine it more carefully. The implied major premise is: Since our God is a God of wisdom and of love and of understanding, he will not expect man to do what he cannot understand. The minor premise is: Man cannot understand the teaching which God has given to him through the Lord Jesus Christ. The conclusion: Therefore, God will not expect man to follow this teaching. If these premises are true, the conclusion is true. If either of the premises is false, we can put no confidence in the conclusion. All people who have any reasonable knowledge of the Bible will readily accept the major premise as being true. God does not expect people to follow instructions that they cannot understand. But what is the evidence that the minor premise is true? Why have we come to believe that man cannot understand God's teaching? What proof can be offered in support of this idea that has acquired such a significant place in the religious thinking of so many people? In my examination of the matter I have failed to discover anything that appears to be worthy of being called proof. In fact, it appears to be a mere assumption. It is not even a reasonable assumption as it has no logical relationship to the fact from which it is drawn. The fact that there are so many different doctrines in America which in some parts conflict with each other has been taken to indicate that nobody understands God's teaching. Such

an assumption is evidently irrelevant. The multiplicity of conflicting interpretations of the Bible may be taken to mean that a large number of people misunderstand its teaching but by no reasonable course of logic does it even imply that no one understands the Bible teaching. Furthermore, any individual who has accepted the assumption that man cannot understand God's teaching has evidently done so without considering the implications of such, without recognizing that it is not only in conflict with the basic facts supporting the major premise and consequently making the conclusion meaningless, but also gravely reflecting upon the integrity of the scriptures and reproachfully belittling the very nature of the God whom he proposes to serve. If man cannot understand God's teaching, then God has given man a teaching that he cannot understand. If God has given man a teaching that he cannot understand, how can he keep God's commandments, how can he love God, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3). If man cannot love God, then he cannot be saved. If God has presented man with such an impossibility, then he is neither a God of wisdom nor a God of love. If he is not a God of wisdom and a God of love, then the Bible revelation of him is false. And if the Bible revelation of him is false, we are without foundation for our religion.

I am persuaded that everyone who has a true faith in God, when he has honestly followed through the implication of the rationalization that people cannot see the Bible alike will be ready to join in the cry uttered by

the apostle Paul in reply to a question that reflected upon the faithfulness of God. "God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). May God grant that we may become big enough to recognize how little we are and to cease trying to justify or excuse our failure in dealing with the word of God by the use of such thoughtless, defensive rationalizations as this one. This matter is too serious to be played with, and surely we do not want to make it more serious by casting a reflection upon God in an effort to defend our own failure.

Another rationalization that has been innocently invented in an effort to justify one's failure or refusal to do some of the things that were taught by Jesus and the apostles may be stated in these words, "No one keeps God's teachings through Christ perfectly, some fail in one part, some fail in another therefore there can be no definite practice that is required of everyone." Certainly the first part of the statement is true if it is taken broadly, for if man were able to keep all of the commandments of Christ perfectly, he would have been able to keep the teaching through Moses perfectly. If that were true, Christ died for nought. Why should the fact that people make many mistakes and even fail in many practices, be taken to indicate that there is no act regardless of how simple it is, that all would be able to do? Why should we assume that man's failure to follow Christian practices perfectly in meeting his problems of widely varying complexities, in rapidly changing situations that subject him to unusual and unexpected influences that

he would be unable, in the quietude of his own meditation with unlimited time to consider, to understand and follow simple instruction that is carefully stated and fully illustrated? Or why should we be disposed to accept the practices in our world of religious confusion as the basis for judging what people should do who would inherit eternal life instead of accepting the instruction of the Bible as it has been given.

We should not overlook the fact that it is one thing to try and fail and quite another thing to fail to try. Is there any average adult human being that cannot comply with God's teaching on baptism if he tries? Or that cannot repent if he allows the gospel to have free course in his life? Or will not naturally confess Jesus as Lord if he believes it? Here we generally meet with a companion rationalization. The person just does not understand everything and surely if he makes an honest effort to do what he knows to do, he will not be condemned because of his failure to understand. To this is generally added, "Surely one is not required to understand everything about God's teaching in order to be saved." This last statement is one with which I believe most people would agree, but this can be true without meaning that it is not necessary to understand any thing or that there are not some things that must be understood. God's teaching on repentance, on confession, on baptism, as well as on many other subjects, is too plain to be misunderstood. The behavior involved is too simple for one to even suggest that anyone who wants to comply with the teaching is not capable of doing so.

There is another point that should be considered in the matter. Is his failure to follow the Bible teaching due to the fact that he "cannot understand," or that he "does not understand"? If it is the latter, another question is in order, "What effort has he made to understand?" Remember that study of God's word is one way we show our love for God. And further, if he has honestly studied the Bible, is his failure to understand to be accounted for by a personal element? After all, is his failure due to not understanding, or to not believing? Is it because he lacks that faith which will humble him before the teaching of God and lead him as a little child, to forget his own ideas and accept God's teaching without reservation or is he still hampered by some human element such as the one that was troubling Peter on the occasion when Jesus made known to him the fact that he was going to Jerusalem and suffer many things, even being killed and raised up the third day (Matt. 16:21).

With Peter, the difficulty was not a matter of understanding. Jesus' statement was simple enough. It was due to Peter's unwillingness to accept what Jesus had said that caused Jesus to address him as "Satan," and to point to the fact that Peter was not minding the things of God but the things of men (Matt. 16:23). This case should certainly remind us of the seriousness of the matter and impel each one of us to re-examine his own case prayerfully to be sure that an unwillingness to put his full trust in Jesus' teaching and lovingly seek to keep his commandments, is not being confused with the inability or failure to understand. Do not overlook the fact that

Jesus' rebuke to Peter was not occasioned by any evidence that Peter did not still wholeheartedly subscribe to the confession which he had made that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but rather, because Peter was not respecting his word as the word of the Son of God. This is the most direful failure that one can make. The most basic lesson of the Bible is that of respecting God's word. May God help us to learn it and to allow it to become effective in our own lives.

One of the most blinding, and therefore most dangerous, rationalizations to be found among religious people has been fabricated in defense of an effort to popularize Christianity by liberalizing it. It is this. Since Jesus prayed that his disciples should all be one, everyone who claims to be a Christian, especially those who are moral in their practices, should be accepted as a part of God's church regardless of whether they have accepted the plain simple teaching of the Bible or not. This simply reduces all of God's teaching relative to man's purification and worship to the level of matters of personal decision. It seems to be an application, or misapplication, of Paul's teaching to the Romans with reference to dealing with the brother whose conscience is very strict on some practices relative to other religions (Rom. 14) to all of God's teaching. The case of this man was not a matter of changing God's word or refusing to do what God taught but rather applying it more strictly than the situation demanded. How can we use this case to justify refusal or failure to do God's commandments that were given to man as instruction to be followed in order to inherit eternal



life? How can we conceive of a failure or refusal to do the things plainly taught by Jesus and the apostles as being no more serious than a refusal to engage in something that is right within itself because one's conscience is misguided and considers it wrong? The former indicates a lack of surrender to God's teaching while the latter represents a full surrender plus the concern of a tender conscience.

This rationalization not only unduly depreciates and belittles God's teaching through Christ but the result of bringing people together by thus accepting their varying, yea, even conflicting, ideas on basic Bible teaching does not produce unity. This is freely admitted in the slogan adopted by the people who press this rationalization. It is, "Liberty and union." They also freely admit that there can be no union as they conceive of it without liberty and liberty with some has come to mean license. Did Jesus pray for union? Any Bible scholar knows better than that. Jesus prayed for unity. Are union and unity the same? Anyone acquainted with English knows better than that. The plea of all Christians should be for unity, but an effort to replace unity with union is a grave distortion of the matter. Some one may object that unity is not being replaced by union but sought through union. And with what results, may I ask? When it is admitted that people who refuse to follow the simple teaching of the Bible stand equally in the favor of God with those who humbly respect his commandments, why should they seek such a union and what will be their attitude toward the truth should they become united after that fashion. Why not teach the truth as it was taught by our Lord?

Thus, seeking unity through the power of the gospel instead of seeking it through the devious and questionable route of organizational pressure. The major trouble with the church today arises from the presence of an increasing number of unconverted people within its borders. We should not overlook the fact that Jesus prayed not that all who were willing to formally acknowledge that he is the Son of God as did the demons but follow their own way be in one church, but that all who believe on him—all who accept his teaching to follow it—should be one even as he and the Father are one. When this happens in any local congregation, its power cannot be resisted by any community. This kind of unity is not accomplished when people with various religious ideas agree to keep house together.

This discussion of rationalizations has not been indulged in for the purpose of being ugly nor with any intention of passing final judgment upon those who use them nor upon anyone else. I have never considered it either my privilege or obligation to pronounce condemnation upon those who propose to follow religious practices that do not conform to my understanding of the Bible teaching. This is God's prerogative and I have no desire to usurp it. As a Christian, I consider it my obligation to make every reasonable effort to help men to understand the truth, and to encourage them to be faithful to it; to become conscious of their error; if such they have, and to turn away from it; to discover deceptive influences that may obscure the truth, and to avoid them. It has been my purpose in this study to make people more conscious of the seriousness of

living and to aid those who are serious in following the surest course toward the eternal inheritance. How much of this teaching you can fail to follow and still be accepted into eternal life, it is not mine to say but my plea to everyone is that you give full place in your heart to the word of God, that you meditate upon it frequently and prayerfully that your faith in God and love for God may be vital influences in your life made evident to all through the care and effort which you expend in doing what God wants you to do in the way he wants you to do it.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 22

1. Why has the reader been advised to re-examine the ideas he holds and weigh those he accepts?
2. What has caused some people to overlook Jesus' answer to this question?
3. How does Jesus make his answer objectively realistic?
4. Give the action part of the picture.
5. What reason did Jesus give for those on the right side of the judgment seat being invited to inherit the kingdom?
6. What should this make clear about Christianity?
7. State some of the answers that Jesus did not give.
8. How had all of these people fed, clothed and visited Jesus?
9. What suggests that these practices represented them as people and were not done to gain the inheritance?
10. How does Jesus show in this lesson that the true test of Christianity is love among brethren?
11. Show by quotations from John's epistle that Jesus is setting forth the comprehensive objective measure of Christianity and not implying that love of the brethren is all of Christianity.
12. Show that love of the brethren as Jesus is representing it here includes obeying all of God's commandments.
13. What will those on the right side of the judgment seat have done and how do we know?
14. What reason does Jesus give that those on the left side of the judgment seat will be told to depart into eternal fire and what will this show about them?

15. What are some of the things that Jesus did not say about the people on the left side of the judgment seat?
16. When will these people have failed to minister to Jesus?
17. Why will these people be consigned to the eternal fire?
18. Whom do we know will be in this group? Why?
19. What have many people done to nullify the definite demands of Christianity and what is the sad thing about it?
20. What warnings from Jesus should never be overlooked by those who would inherit eternal life?
21. State one of the most frequent rationalizations used to justify religious differences and show what it really means.
22. Show how this rationalization is a reflection upon God.
23. Express what should be our attitude toward such in Paul's words.
24. State a second rationalization and show its weakness.
25. State a supplemental or companion rationalization to this one.
26. What may one's failure to follow God's teaching be due to instead of failure to understand?
27. What was Peter's difficulty when he was addressed as "Satan"?
28. What rationalization has been fabricated in defense of liberalizing Christianity?
29. What misapplication does it probably represent? Give evidence.
30. What is the difference between "unity" and "union"?
31. Show how "union" without "unity" is dangerous.
32. What is and what is not the Christian's obligation?

*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes;  
but he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel  
(Prov. 12:15).*













