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—*Batsell Barrett Baxter*

God's Plan and Me

BOOK III

THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S

J. RIDLEY STROOP

Author of

WHY DO PEOPLE NOT SEE THE BIBLE ALIKE?

GOD'S PLAN AND ME

Book I: Jesus' Mission and Method

Book II: How to Inherit Eternal Life

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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 is the third in a series of courses in Bible study that have been prepared under the general title of *God's Plan and Me*. The first course, *Jesus' Mission and Method*, showed how the power of God's teaching becomes effective through the normal operation of the natural laws that have always controlled man's daily activities, to remake everyone who truly believes it. The second course, *How to Inherit Eternal Life*, gave a practical understanding of the Bible way of salvation by dispelling the mystery and mysticism from the words "faith" and "love," as they are used in God's teaching. It is the purpose of this course, *They That Are Christ's*, to present the Bible instruction in Christian living in the framework of Christian relationships in the hope that such an organization of the teaching will make it more meaningful and also will provide a relational context that will aid in determining many detailed practices for which specific instruction is lacking or lacking in clarity. The content of this course should not only instruct those that are Christ's in how to live acceptably as such but should also provide a safe measure by which any honest person can know the soundness of his claim to be one that is Christ's or a Christian.

Although the limitations of this course will not permit an examination of all the teaching within the scope of the title, it is hoped that this picture of the Christian in his relationships may be sufficiently vivid and adequately applied to qualify the student to extend its guiding influence to all other Bible interpretation and to aid in

arriving at decisions in the more complex situations which depend more upon an aggregate of spiritual understanding than upon the interpretation of particular Bible statements.

If this goal is to be accomplished, it will be necessary that thorough examination and careful evaluation be made of the material as it is presented, that we may proceed with confidence. Furthermore, it will be imperative that the ideas be clearly presented, fully established, and well-remembered, if they are to guide our thinking where detailed instruction is lacking or lacking in clarity. Surely, the importance of what is being attempted in this study justifies careful, energetic, and prayerful consideration of what is to follow.

This book is being published with the full awareness that some of the teaching presented is not in complete agreement with that which has been generally taught, but with an unwavering conviction that it is in full accord with divine revelation; it is what the Bible teaches. Therefore, it is the hope of the author that those who read this book, especially those who call themselves Christians, will do so with an earnest desire to know the truth and will be big enough to measure this teaching by the word of God, not by a misinterpretation of it.

I hereby gratefully acknowledge the contributions made to my Bible understanding by many associates and publications past and present but without specific mention lest some be unjustly credited with some of the ideas presented. I accept the full responsibility for these interpretations.

PART I

LESSON 1

RELATIONSHIPS DETERMINE OBLIGATIONS AND PRIVILEGES

This is a fundamental truth and one that is universally applicable. All of man's rightful privileges as well as all of the obligations that he is expected to meet are determined by his relationships. This principle is basic to the very nature of the case and it is easily observable throughout the whole range of human relationships.

When a child is born into this world, he is born into relationships. If he is the first child in the family, his most vital relationship by far is that with his parents—the child-parent relationship. The child's privileges are evident from the beginning, and without them he could not live. They may be summed up in three words: shelter, food, and care. As he grows older he enjoys a wide variety of individual privileges provided in that home. As he grows older he also learns that he has obligations in that relationship. His first obligation is to obey his parents, and it might be added that failure to learn to fulfill this obligation has brought more suffering to the individual, more sorrow to the parents, and more grief to society than any other failure experienced by man. Parents who indulgently permit children to enjoy

the privileges and to shirk the obligations of this relationship have made the greatest failure they will ever make as parents. Failure in this fundamental training not only hinders the child's personal progress but is also the major contributor to family troubles, mental disorders, and crime. As children grow older they are obligated to contribute to that relationship in many ways, including in case of need the supporting of their parents.

If a second child is born into that family, the first child finds himself, by virtue of that birth, in a new relationship—a fraternal relationship. It offers its privileges and also imposes its obligations. The first child has the privilege of playing with his younger brother or sister. As the children grow older, the relationship provides the privilege of loving and being loved, as well as the obligation of helping and protecting.

At approximately the age of six the child enters school. This brings a new set of relationships with new privileges and obligations. Among the privileges afforded are class instruction, teacher's assistance, use of school equipment, and the association with other children. Along with these privileges, however, the child must accept the obligation to comply with the classroom procedure, to participate in educational activities including preparation of lessons, and to conform to the social demands of the relationship.

Another relationship enjoyed by many children as they grow older may be that of gang, club, or team. Such a relationship offers a variety of privileges such as association, sharing, and playing together, which are always accompanied by the obligations of loyal support through

enthusiastic participation, and fair play.

In later years most people enter into a variety of business relationships. Some are more or less permanent, others are temporary. The former are represented by business partnerships which not only afford the opportunity of participation with the honors provided by success but also the privilege of sharing in the profits. But with these go the obligation to invest both time and money and to share the problems involved. Probably the most frequent temporary sort of business relationship is experienced when one borrows money from another. The privilege of the one who borrows, of course, is the use of the money for the specified time. His obligation is to return the money together with interest according to agreement. If this is done there is no further obligation. If, however, something happens that will prevent the borrower from repaying the money when it is due, honesty imposes the obligation under these circumstances that his creditor be so informed at his earliest convenience and that the best arrangements possible be made to take care of the situation according to his creditor's needs or wishes. A failure to do this is a failure to meet one's obligation and a reflection upon his honesty.

A citizen has both privileges and obligations. Through the local unit of government he enjoys improvements and benefits that could not be had on an individual basis, as well as protection of his individual rights against those who would take unfair advantage. From the national government he receives various commercial and industrial benefits, along with protection against nations that would

encroach upon the rights of the citizens of this country. As a citizen there are also obligations which one must meet if he is to maintain his place of honor. He is honor bound to obey the laws of the land including those that require the payment of taxes in support of the civil power.

Another relationship in which all people participate is commonly known as friendship. Any relationship that may be designated by the term friendship has both privileges and obligations. A friend enjoys the association, the confidence, and the helpfulness of his friends, but in return he must contribute to a pleasant association thus providing a similar confidence by being a source of helpfulness to his friends.

The marriage relationship likewise has its privileges to be enjoyed and its obligations to be met. This relationship is similar in nature to friendship in that it affords many of the same privileges and poses the same obligations. But it is a closer, deeper, and a more permanent relationship in which the life of each in reality becomes a part of the life of the other above and beyond the privileges of the closest possible friendship. It affords a lifetime companionship. The marriage relationship permits intimacies and satisfactions that may never rightfully be enjoyed outside of that relationship. The obligations imposed are in proportion to the privileges enjoyed. Besides contributing unreservedly to the material needs of those sharing the relationship and cooperation wholeheartedly in all matters of mutual concern, each party must maintain personal purity and complete fidelity to the mar-

riage vows.

After marriage there is another relationship which generally follows in due course of time—the parent-child relationship. A child is born of that marriage; thus the husband and wife become father and mother. This new relationship brings its privileges and also its obligations. Something might be observed here that is generally true, that whether a thing is classified as a privilege or an obligation depends largely upon the attitude of the person involved. If the primary motive in doing for another is one's own enjoyment, it is considered a privilege. If it is mainly for the other person's benefit, it may be classed as an obligation. The classification however is somewhat arbitrary. In fact, in the true parent-child relationship the greater the need of the child, or the greater the joy provided for the child, the greater will the privilege be considered. Speaking, however, in terms of the general classification stated above, the parents of the child enjoy the privilege of possessing, of loving, and of cherishing the baby and later they have the privilege of being loved, respected, and honored by the child and of rejoicing in the child's accomplishments. They have the obligations to clothe, to feed, and to protect the child from danger and to provide for him the training that not only qualifies him for earning a livelihood but also for living happily here and hereafter. The parents' most important obligation, the one that is the most vital to the child, is that of providing him with the proper sense of values: material, social, and spiritual. A failure to do this not only leaves the child without a guide but leaves him misguided. The

value tags which have been attached to the things of life through the child's own experience are the fundamental determiners of his own activities. He must prove all things and when he has done so he will holdfast that which he finds to be good: that which others have shown him to be good not merely what parents tried to tell him is good.

This obligation of parents is becoming increasingly more difficult to fulfill and consequently the results are becoming increasingly more disappointing. This is due in most cases to a combination of influences. Unfortunately, a large core group of society has departed from the Bible standard of values and has popularized those values which cater to the practice of self-indulgence. In the first place, the scale of values that is applied by most parents has become so confused and distorted by the values that have become socially acceptable that they are disqualified for the work of guidance. In the second place, the influence of popular sanction on the side of self-indulgence obscures the experiential picture so much that the child's sense of values will follow a false organization and misguide his decisions. In the third place, the effectiveness of general social influence has been greatly increased by coming into the child's life much earlier and much more fully through the modern means of communication, especially radio and television.

From this list of cases it is evident that man's obligations and privileges as they relate to his common experiences of life are determined by his relationships. In the following examples God's recognition of this principle is

evident. The effectiveness of the operation of the principle in human relationships is shown by Paul's teaching to Timothy in his instruction relative to the church's care of widows: "But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God. But if any provideth not for his own, and especially his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim. 5: 4,8). From these verses it is abundantly clear that compliance with the principle was reinforced or demanded by Christian faith and doctrine, the failure to comply being inconsistent with a living, active faith. To fail was to deny the faith.

In teaching the Christians at Rome that they should not continue in sin, Paul makes it clear that relationships determine privileges and obligations in God's dealings with man or man's dealings with God as it does in the field of human relationships. "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 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. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when

ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life" (Rom. 6:16-22). From this it is clear that so long as these people were servants of sin they were "free in regard of righteousness" and had only such privileges as sin offered; but now in their new relationship as "servants of righteousness," they were obligated to avoid sin and to do righteousness enjoying the privileges of God's favors and the hope of eternal life.

Jesus evidenced the immutable character of this principle when he declared: "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other" (Matt. 6:24). The fact that two conflicting relationships cannot be maintained concurrently, that one cannot maintain the relationship of servant to two masters, shows the binding effect of each relationship. The inability to meet the obligations of both the relationships necessitates the abandoning of one of the two and shows the unyielding nature of the principle.

This should also remind us that if we fail to meet the obligations of a relationship, the relationship will deteriorate; and if the obligations continue to be neglected, the relationship will be disrupted. This is not only true in man's relationship to man but is also true, and has been true from the beginning, in the case of man's relationship

to God. When God made Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden, he was to dress and keep the garden. He was given the privilege of eating of all the trees of the garden except the one that grew in the midst of the garden—the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Concerning it he was instructed, “Thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). These privileges and obligations were a part of a very close relationship with God. We are told that “they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Gen. 3:8), and that God talked to Adam (3:9). But when they were unfaithful to their relationship they lost it. They were driven forth out of the garden that very day. Why was man driven out from his close relationship with God? It was because he failed to fulfill the obligations of the relationship. What obligation did he fail to fulfill? The obligation to respect God’s instruction by keeping his commandments. Since man was cast out of this close relationship with God because he failed to respect God’s teachings, why should he expect God to receive him back to live with him forever if he refuses to respect God’s teachings by doing the things that God would have him do? Certainly if he lost his relationship with God through his failure to keep God’s commandments, he will never regain it so long as he refuses to accept God’s way to walk in his commandments; so long as he refuses to honor God by making an honest effort to follow his teaching.

We should also remember that a relationship determines one’s privileges as well as his obligations. And

under no circumstances should we allow ourselves to believe that we will be permitted to enjoy the privileges of an eternal inheritance without entering into the relationship to which the privileges belong. God has given man a way to return to that relationship. Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and added, "no one cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). How can people reject the pleadings of God through our Lord Jesus Christ and still think that they may enjoy the blessings of the relationship which they stubbornly reject? We should not forget that inheritance is based upon family relationship; therefore, only those who are in God's family are heirs of the blessings of God. The relationship is kept functional by fulfilling as best one can its obligations.

Sometimes we find ourselves confronted with obligations that conflict with each other and it becomes necessary to decide which we will fulfill. This decision is determined by the relative values of the two relationships involved. If the relationships vary widely in value, it will be easy. We will comply with the obligation demanded by the relationship of greater value. If the relationships are considered approximately equal in value and both are important to us, we are confronted with a problem situation. This can be avoided in part by avoiding those relationships that impose obligations that conflict with those of relationships that are important to us. This should impress the fact that our choice of relationships are our most important decisions.

The question is sometimes asked, "Can a good man

be saved outside of the church?" And when the question is answered in the negative, some people are shocked, reject the answer, and even show a resentment toward the person who gave it. All of this is the result of a failure to understand the matter in the light of the principle under consideration in this lesson, along with a lack of acquaintance with some of the Bible teaching. Also some will proceed to justify their rejection of the answer with the reasoning: "Surely a God of love would not send to the place of punishment a person who had been faithful and upright in all of his human relationships, a good moral man, unusually charitable toward the unfortunate, and neighborly toward all, just because he failed to confess Jesus as his Lord and to comply with the Bible teaching relative to forgiveness of sin. Surely one would not be lost because of a little thing like that." Let us look at the situation in its true perspective.

The word "church" is used in the Bible to speak of the people who had accepted Jesus as Lord. It is the group name for Christians and therefore designates the relationship. Those who were in the church or made up the church were those who had confessed Jesus as Lord and were baptized into Christ and were in the Christian relationship. Those were Christ's; the others were not. This was not a small difference, it was the difference between being a child in the family of God and not being a child in the family of God; between being in Christ (Gal. 2:27) or not being in Christ; between being Christ's or not being Christ's. So the failure to confess and accept Christ as Lord was not a little thing.

And further, when a person hears God's teaching and fails to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, he has not merely rejected the latter but has rejected God's teaching, refusing to believe it to be true. When one refuses to believe God's teaching to be true, he brands it as false and makes God a liar. This is clearly stated by the apostle John: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son. 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. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:9-11). On the other hand we are told, "He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true" (John 3:33). So the difference between accepting Christ as the Son of God and rejecting him as such is the difference between adjudging God to be true and making him a liar. This is not a small difference; this is not a little thing. In reality, when a person does this, what is he doing? He is placing his own wisdom above God's wisdom. This is exactly what Eve did; she followed her own reasoning instead of God's teaching (Gen. 3:1-6). Was that a little thing? Neither is it a little thing today when man spurns "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22), and seeks to be saved by his own righteousness. This is just what the Jews tried to do and failed miserably. God all but destroyed a nation (Israel) to teach man that he

could not be saved by his own righteousness. Are you going to reject the lesson? Are you going to attempt to do what man has never been able to do? Can you afford to gamble against such odds? Can you hope to enjoy the privileges of the relationship with God and never enter the relationship?

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 1

1. To what extent is this principle applicable?
2. Show how the application of this principle begins.
3. What has resulted from the failure of the child to learn to fulfill this first basic obligation?
4. What change is effected in a child's relationship when a baby brother or sister is born and what are the resulting obligations and privileges?
5. What obligations and privileges belong to the school relationship?
6. What is the application of this principle in the gang, club, or team relationship?
7. What are the general obligations and privileges in business relationships?
8. What are one's obligations under varying circumstances if he borrows money?
9. Briefly state or indicate one's obligations and privileges as a citizen.
10. What are the obligations and privileges of a friendship?
11. Outline the privileges and obligations of the marriage relationship.
12. Upon what does classification as a privilege or an obligation depend?
13. List some of the privileges and obligations in the parent-child relationship.
14. What is the parent's most important obligation to the child and why?

15. Why is it becoming increasingly difficult for the parent to fulfill this obligation?
16. Give evidence of divine recognition of this principle in human relationships.
17. Give evidence of Bible recognition of this principle in man's relationship to God.
18. How did Jesus evidence the immutable character of this principle?
19. What will result when we fail to meet the obligations of a relationship?
20. Show that this has been true from the beginning of man's history.
21. In what obligation did man fail that caused him to lose his close relationship with God?
22. What is determined by a relationship as well as obligations?
23. What relationship is our eternal inheritance based upon?
24. What are man's most important decisions? Why?
25. How do some people try to justify their refusal of the idea that a "good man" cannot be saved out of the church?
26. Show that the difference between being in the church and out of the church is not a small difference.
27. What has one done who hears God's teaching and fails to accept Jesus as the Christ?
28. God all but destroyed the Jewish people to teach man what lesson?

LESSON 2

THE SUPREME RELATIONSHIP

Before beginning the discussion of this topic, let us recall the points we established in the preceding discussion. By the use of numerous illustrations we have established the fact that Christian relationships determine obligations and privileges and, further, that it is unfair and not right for one to presume to enjoy the privileges without being in the relationship and, consequently, without accepting the obligations. Also that if one refuses or neglects to meet the obligations of a relationship, that the relationship deteriorates and may be lost completely.

Certainly the supreme relationship of Christians, they that are Christ's, is their relationship to Christ. (Surely everyone agrees that Christ's blessings are for them that are his.) However, due to the very nature of the case, their relationship to Christ comprehends their relationship to God. Not only are we told that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19), that Christ was called "Immanuel," which is "interpreted God with us" (Matt. 1:23), that he is "the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance" (Heb. 1:3); but also that Jesus declared that "I and my father are one" (John 10:30), "my teaching is not mine but his that sent me" (John 7:16), and "my meat is to do the will

of him that sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34); and that Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:21,23). Thus it is clear that to be Christ's we must be God's, to honor Christ we must honor God, to receive the blessings of Christ we must receive the blessings of God, for in reality Christ is the mediator of God's better covenant to us (Heb. 8:6). His promises are God's promises, his joy is God's glory. Therefore, no attempt will be made to speak separately of the Christian's relationship to Christ and to God, for basically it is one relationship so far as obligations and privileges are concerned. If we are loyal to Christ, we are loyal to God; if loyal to God, we are loyal to Christ. So some statements used will refer directly to Christ, others to God, and still others may include both; but their nature will be such that the meaning will be clear.

The supreme relationship of the Christian is the divine relationship. It not only transcends all others, but it determines the relationships into which a Christian should enter and sustains him in his relationships. This inter-relationship is such that the obligations in all of the Christian's relationships become obligations to God and, therefore, must be fulfilled in order to be faithful in his relationship to Christ and God. This is shown by Paul's instruction to Christian servants, "Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23), and also to Christian citizens, "Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment"

(Rom. 13:2). This means that a Christian must sincerely seek to be faithful in the fulfillment of all his obligations and all of his rightful relationships, bearing in mind that all of a Christian's obligations are obligations to God. For the sake of clarity we shall consider for the present only the one basic obligation in our relationship with God that makes it so, and shall examine the others as the picture gradually unfolds.

This one all-inclusive obligation of the Christian in his relationship to God is the complete and implicit obedience of his teaching. The very nature of man's relationship to God under the gospel teaching demands this. It is required by every representation of the Christian's relationship to God and Christ. This is the basic obligation to which I referred. Every expression that refers to, alludes to, or in any way indicates the nature of that relationship demands that obedience. Since this obligation is basic to all others, its importance demands a very careful and prayerful consideration, especially since so many people have failed to accept it. This being true, it shall be our sole purpose in this discussion to show from the Bible teaching that the obligation of implicit obedience is demanded by this relationship.

First, let us observe man is a creature and God through Christ is his Creator (Gen. 1:2 and John 1:3). He has not the least right to question the unrestricted control of his creator. This was made evident by Paul when he said, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter the right

over the clay?" (Rom. 9:20-21). One might object that this is the relationship of all men to God and not a Christian's relationship. It is true that all men share this relationship, but not all men recognize it. To the Christian who believes God to be his creator, who through faith accepts the relationship as being valid, the obligation that pertains will be recognized as being vital. All who truly recognize God as their creator will honor him by respecting his teaching.

Man is a subject of God the king and, therefore, obligated to respect and honor every decree. The recognition of this is shown in these words, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever" (I Tim. 1:17), and "He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable" (I Tim. 6:15-16). The Christian has been translated "into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13) and should obey every commandment of his king. This is certainly given emphasis by the Bible teaching to Christians to be subject to the civil authorities. Peter exhorted the elect in Asia Minor, "Be subject to every ordinance (or institution) of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as supreme; or to the governors, as sent by him" (I Pet. 2:13-14). Paul exhorted the Romans, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment" (Rom. 13:1-2). Surely if we are to be subject to or to obey every ordinance of

man for the Lord's sake, we are to obey every ordinance of the Lord for the Lord's sake. And surely if those who resist or refuse to obey the civil power receive condemnation, those who refuse to obey God will not escape condemnation.

The Christian is a servant or bondservant of God and Christ. Wherever either of these words is employed, the very use of the word in the context shows beyond question that the person to whom the word may be rightfully and honorably applied must render obedience to the one being served. Paul shows this to be true under grace as well as under the law. "What, then, shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 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. 6:15-18). Since "sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4), or behavior out of harmony with God's law, the Christian who does not practice God's teaching is in sin.

The care and earnestness that should characterize the Christian's effort to do God's will completely is shown in these statements: "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart, as unto the Lord, and not in the way of eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as

servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph. 6:5-8). "Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord; whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22-24). If Paul did not understand that Christians were to obey Christ's teaching, not their own wishes, and had not taught the Ephesians and Colossians to understand the same, how could he encourage these people to obey their masters by admonishing them to "work as unto the Lord"? Or what did he mean by saying, "Be obedient . . . with fear and trembling as unto Christ"? Neither can our freedom or liberty in Christ be thought to change the matter. "For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God" (I Pet. 2:15-16). Christians are free from the compulsion and punishment of the law but "bondservants of God." Certainly bondservants cannot follow their own wishes, ignoring what they are told to do, and be pleasing.

Peter admonished the Christians in Asia Minor, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord" (I Pet. 3:15). The word "Lord" means ruler. So Peter's admonition is to

set Christ apart in your heart as ruler. A ruler rules. If he rules, we honor his rule; we do what he teaches. Jesus depicts the glaring inconsistency of one who would call upon him as Lord and fail to make him ruler in his heart by obeying his teaching, when he says, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Jesus showed the completeness with which his disciples should give up their own ways and follow his teaching when he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Please note that Jesus did not say deny himself this or that but, "Let him deny himself." Let him surrender the right to direct his own steps, then he can follow the teaching of the Lord. Since we are taught to deny self and follow him, it is evident that when we replace his teaching with our own, we have reversed the matter. We are following self and, consequently, denying him. "By their works, they deny me." To this should be added Paul's warning to those who would teach others a "different" or "perverted" gospel: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8). To this Paul adds, "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant (bondservant) of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). The context shows this to mean that if he should change the teaching of Christ with reference to the practices that men should follow, he would not be a servant of Christ and, therefore, have no right to call him Lord.

There is also an outstanding characteristic of a good servant that gives further emphasis to the need for obedience. He must be humble. To Christians it was written, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (I Pet. 5:6-7). "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble. Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you" (Jas. 4:6-10). Jesus shows that it must not be overlooked. In speaking of the Publican, "I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). Paul has made it plain that being humble was characterized by complete obedience, by pointing us to the Lord's example, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbleth himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Where is the truly humble servant whose nature will permit him to dare to change his Lord's bidding? Or where is the truly humble servant of God that will presume to be wiser than his Lord and proceed to exalt his own ideas above God's teaching? This inconsistency is unthinkable.

Another expression that suggests the character of the relationship with reference to the obligation of obedience is found in the term "soldier." The Christian is spoken of as a soldier or referred to in terms that have been accepted as justifying the idea. This is shown by the use made in worship of the song, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" Paul exhorted Timothy, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 2:3), and showed him the demands of that relationship by saying, "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier" (II Tim. 2:4). It is true that this was addressed to a Christian that was serving in a special capacity, that of a preacher. From the use that Paul made of the soldier's armour in teaching his lessons to Christians in Romans, Ephesians, and Thessalonians, however, it is evident that the word "soldier" can be rightfully applied to all Christians. Surely the soldier must follow the orders that were given by him whom he serves. So where God has given instructions, it is the Christian's obligation to comply with them immediately and completely.

Another expression of the relationship is to be found in the term children or child. Every Christian is a child of God. Paul exhorted the Ephesian Christians, "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1). Could children who believe they are beloved do otherwise? If they are faithful children could they fail to love and to obey? If some Christians were disposed to forget or to neglect their obligation as children of God their father; surely, the seriousness of such inconsistent

behavior is made evident through the Bible teaching to children to obey their earthly parents: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise)" (Eph. 6:1-2). If it is right for children to obey their earthly father, undoubtedly it is right for God's children to obey him. Certainly no one would think for a moment that a child who obeys his earthly parents in those teachings that suited him, but refused to do the things that he did not want to do, had complied with this Bible teaching. Then how can we think that we can deal with our heavenly father's teaching that way and be complying with the commandment to obey him?

Another indication of the relationship between the Christian and God is that he is a worshipper of God. Surely a true worshipper of God will put God first. Surely God will hold the first place with him; and if he does, his teaching will hold the first place in his life. Undoubtedly the one who seeks to honor God by worshipping him will seek to make this worship most pleasing by doing what God has taught people to do in worship and by doing it the way that God has taught. Doing otherwise would be inconsistent with the attitude of worship which is an attitude of praise and exaltation. True worship is the expression of one's devotion. Can a person be sincere in his devotion and disrespect God's teachings or wishes relative to his offering of that devotion or worship? How can such a worship be pleasing in the sight of God? And furthermore, if one refuses or fails to honor God in his life, why should he expect the praise of his lips, that

which would be inconsistent with the attitude of his heart, to be pleasing in the sight of God? Should your friend dishonor your wishes in what he did, how pleasing to you would be the praise of his lips? Likewise, if he were disobedient to God's teaching, there is little reason to believe that his praise would be well pleasing in the sight of God. As a true worshipper a Christian must not only worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23) but must heed the other commandments also if his worship is to be acceptable to God. Jesus said, "If, therefore, thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). This certainly indicates that a Christian must comply with God's teachings relative to his brother if his worship is going to be acceptable before God. Jesus shows the ineffectiveness, yea, the worthlessness of one's prayer for forgiveness if he fails to follow God's teaching on forgiving others: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). John also pointed to the obedience of God's commandments as the reason that our prayers are answered, "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). Jesus also showed worship to be in vain or worthless if the worshippers left the commandment of God: "And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypo-

crites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Mark 7; 6-7). Surely these statements leave no doubt that in order to be a worshipper whose praise and adoration are pleasing to God, one must be dedicated to the task of keeping his commandments.

The Christian is also a friend of God. Jesus said to his disciples "I have called you friends" (John 15:5). What is the basic obligation of this expression of the relationship? What is the obligation of a friend, if it is not to act like a friend? How can a friend act like a friend without complying with the wishes of him to whom he would be a friend, insofar as they are right and reasonable? Jesus expressed this obligation as the foundation of friendship when he said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). It has already been shown in the preceding lesson that failure to meet the obligations of a relationship causes that relationship to deteriorate or even to be discontinued or nullified. This is certainly true of friendship. Mention has also been made of the fact that it was man's failure to respect or obey God's word as a friend that caused his separation from God.

Further emphasis is given to this basic obligation of the Christian in his relationship to God by the means or manner in which he was brought into the relationship. Referring to Christ, Paul said, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of

good works" (Titus 2:14). On other occasions he spoke of Christians as being bought, purchased, or ransomed. "Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men" (I Cor. 7:23). "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times" (I Tim. 2:5-6). These statements represent the Christian relationship as that of ownership. Christians are people who have been bought. This unmistakably underscores the basic obligation as that of obedience.

There are other terms that suggest this obligation, but these are certainly sufficient to leave no doubt about the matter. Before we close let us notice a few statements which indicate the completeness with which this obligation should be fulfilled. We are all acquainted with Jesus' admonition to "Follow me." A number of things are pointed out in the New Testament in which we should follow him; but certainly to follow him is to attempt to do as he did, to live as he lived, to be interested in things and in people as he was interested in them. Probably the most exacting term that is used in this field is the word "imitators." In Ephesians Paul exhorts Christians, "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1). One might ask how we can imitate God when we have never seen him, but we hear Jesus state as recorded in John 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the

Father.” So those who imitated Jesus in his life and day imitated God. Paul urged the Corinthians to live just as he lived. “I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me” (I Cor. 4:16). An imitator is one who makes an effort to do as nearly as he can just what the other person does and also as nearly as he can the way in which the other person does it. So by this Paul is teaching them to do the things that he did. He limits them, however, in the matter of imitating him by a statement made later to the same people, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1), which means that through his example he was teaching them to imitate Christ and by imitating Christ they would be imitating God. To the Christian people at Thessalonica Paul said, “And ye became imitators of us and of the Lord.” The effort that should be made in the matter of imitating those who had imitated Christ is shown in this admonition to the Hebrew Christians, “And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fullness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:11-12). Surely these statements make it clear that Christians should seek to do God’s commandments, not part of them but all of them; not carelessly but implicitly.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 2

1. Summarize the points that were established in the preceding discussion.
2. Show how the Christian's relationship to God should influence him in all of his relationships.
3. What is the all-inclusive obligation of the Christian in his relationship to God?
4. What demands that a Christian fulfill this obligation?
5. How does Paul show man's obligation to God as a creature?
6. Show that a Christian is a subject of God, the king and what this implies.
7. What conclusion is drawn from the fact that Christians must be subject to civil powers in order to be pleasing to God?
8. Show from the Roman letter that being a servant of God demands obedience.
9. In Paul's teachings to servants or slaves to be obedient to their masters, how does he show that Christians are to be obedient to Christ?
10. From Peter show that our "freedom" or liberty in Christ does not change a Christian's obligation of obedience.
11. What is the meaning of "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord"?
12. How did Jesus show the completeness with which his disciples should surrender to Christ's teachings?
13. In writing to the Galatians, how does Paul show the need for faithfulness to God's teachings?
14. Show that a Christian must be humble and how this demands obedience.
15. Show how obedience is demanded by the use of the term "soldier."
16. Show the obedience that is demanded by the use of the term "children" or "child" of God.
17. Show in detail how being a worshipper demands obedience.
18. What demand does friendship make?
19. Show that the manner in which one enters into the Christian relationship demands obedience.
20. Give evidence from Jesus and from Paul that the Christian should carefully follow a definite pattern of life.

LESSON 3

THE SPIRIT OF THE RELATIONSHIP

By this title we mean the Spirit that is demanded by the Christian relationship, the Spirit that must pervade and guide those who are in the Christian relationship.

Those who may rightfully claim a place in this relationship are Christians, "They That Are Christ's." They have been purchased by Christ's blood, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). If those who claim to be Christians are not Christ's, their claim is false. Now Paul declared, "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). Therefore he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is without a place in the relationship, or he that has a place in the relationship must have the Spirit of Christ. Thus it is clear that the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the relationship.

This teaching is too plain to be misunderstood and too vital to be overlooked or ignored. Certainly this emphasizes the absolute need for his Spirit. Whatever else may or may not be required, the people of this relationship must have the Spirit of Christ. Whatever those who call themselves Christians may do or may fail to do, certainly this is a foundation fact from which we may think,

and in harmony with which we must keep our thinking. We must have the Spirit of Christ or we are none of his.

Unfortunately, when we speak of the Spirit, it seems that to many people we begin to draw a curtain and maybe to a certain extent that is a natural outcome because our teaching on the Spirit is not too plain. It is limited. So our information about the Spirit is limited. Man, from his own wisdom and from his own reasoning, does not create or develop information about the Spirit. We only know what God has revealed and that is only fragmentary information. Even the variety of expressions by which it is called tends to add confusion rather than clarity, especially when the application of these is restricted by a narrow concept of the Spirit based upon an overdrawn emphasis of some particular expression or occasion. It is spoken of as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9). He is called the Comforter, the Spirit of truth and the Holy Spirit: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever," and "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:16, 26). Also he is referred to as the Spirit of Jesus: "and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not" (Acts 16:7). Peter also shows that the Spirit of Christ and the

Holy Spirit are the same, "searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Pet. 1:11) and "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). This should warn against any attempt to attribute to the Spirit a definite all-inclusive specialized function with the demand that all other Bible teaching be interpreted in harmony with it or to establish a narrow rigid description of the Spirit suitable to one of the names by which it is called without giving sufficient latitude to the concept to include what is represented in the other descriptive phrases.

There is no more exact picture of the Spirit than there is of the Father or of the Son. The Bible nowhere gives a full description of God. There are statements here and there that give partial impressions by speaking of certain attributes, characteristics, or accomplishments; or such are revealed through God's dealings with man. Likewise there is no reasonable description of Jesus, the Christ, either in person while in the flesh or of his spiritual character. He is revealed largely through his life and teaching or by the naming of subjective characteristics. Some people have tried to describe God by putting together the various incidental statements about him to produce only a monstrosity. Some people, after a similar fashion, have attempted to tell of the Holy Spirit with results that are equally disappointing.

Others have distorted their conception of the work or

influence of the Spirit by attributing to it in all of its functions the over-ruling power that was apparently manifest on the day of the first Pentecost after the resurrection and at the house of Cornelius. This has led to the idea among men that one must have the Holy Spirit before he can believe; and when he has once received it, he cannot turn from the truth or be in danger of forsaking the right. However, there is not one case in the whole New Testament record since the gospel was first proclaimed by the inspired apostles where the Spirit was received by any one before he believed.

They seem to overlook the fact that the Holy Spirit was given to different classes of people under different circumstances and to serve different purposes. It was given to the apostles to teach them "all things" and to bring to their remembrance what Jesus had taught them (John 14:26). It was given to the believers at the house of Cornelius as an evidence to Peter that he was doing right in preaching to the Gentiles and that they should be received into the faith: "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we" (Acts 10:47). Among other things, God used gifts of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the preaching of the apostles: "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4). It was given to those who believed as a seal or an earnest of their inheritance: "In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having

also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

They seem to have confused the power of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost with the case of the people who accepted the apostles' teaching on that day and even overlooked the fact that Peter stated specifically that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit after they had repented and were baptized unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This agrees with the statement by the apostles, "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). It is also in harmony with Peter's writing to people who had obeyed the truth and had received the Holy Spirit: "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).

It is also shown by the case of the Galatian Christians that having received the Spirit did not keep them from turning away from Christ. Paul unquestionably shows that they had received the Spirit by these questions: "Oh foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now

perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain" (Gal. 3:1-4). What could they mean otherwise? They had not only received the Spirit, but they knew in what way or by what means they had received it, or what would Paul mean by saying, "This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2)? Certainly the next question, "Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3), together with Paul's statement, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6), indicate that they were turning away from Christ or that there was grave danger of their doing so. We might also note that there was danger of such a turn being fatal, or why would Paul have been so concerned about it and what could show his concern more than his statement, "I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain" (Gal. 4:11)? Paul's labor surely would not have been in vain if the Galatians who had received the Spirit could not be lost, and how could they be severed from Christ and not be lost (Gal. 5:4)?

We find that a similar warning was given to the Hebrew Christians: "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). There can be no doubt that those being described had received the Holy Spirit and certainly no question about their hopeless condition, if they were to fall away. And why would the inspired writer be giving such a warning if there was no danger in their falling away?

The methods or means through which the Holy Spirit has been imparted to men have probably given rise to further confusion of thinking. It appears to have been accomplished in at least three ways: through the word of God directly, "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); through the laying on of apostles' hands, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17); and directly from God without the use of any regular agency, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word" (Acts 10:44). "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Since the last two are miraculous and, therefore, more spectacular than the first and are spoken of more frequently, some people think of the bestowing of the Holy Spirit after this pattern only and consider it only in its miraculous effect. It appears that the Spirit bestowed miraculously as a gift was for the basic support of the gospel as divine and helpful to all generally, but that which was received through the word was a power in the life of the one who received it.

Whether or not these statements in regard to receiving

the Holy Spirit are correct, there may be a question; but there are two things relative to the Spirit of which there can be no question. (1) They that are Christ's must have the Spirit and (2) it must become effective in the life of the individual Christian. Those that are worthy of a place in this relationship must not only have the Spirit but must be led by the Spirit. In the same chapter and the same discussion where Paul showed that one must have the Spirit of Christ in order to be Christ's, he also made it clear that he must be led by the Spirit of God to be a son of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). In fact, Paul's purpose was not to show that it was a mere requirement of God's teaching that one have the Spirit of Christ, but rather that one must have the Spirit of Christ and allow it to rule in his life in order that he may be pleasing in the sight of God: "For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). Having called attention to God's blessings through the Spirit, Paul summed up the situation in these words: "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:12-13).

In giving to the Galatian Christians this teaching of their need for the Holy Spirit, Paul presented it in more objective detail that will improve our understanding of the Spirit of Christ and the meaning of being led by the Spirit. For the best understanding of this teaching, let us recall the setting in which it was given. It was addressed to people who were being tempted to accept circumcision and to put their trust in the law of Moses, and to whom Paul had made it plain that by doing so they would be severed from Christ and would bring themselves into bondage to the law (Gal. 5:3-4). These he had also urged not to use their freedom in Christ for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another (Gal. 5:13), and by doing so, they would fulfill the law (Gal. 5:14). He had also warned them against doing otherwise. Paul then proceeded to show them that the Spirit which they had received "through the hearing of faith," the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of their present relationship, offered them the happy solution of the whole situation. "But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:16-18). Thus walking by the Spirit would stop their living after their own fleshly lusts and would remove their continual conflict between good and evil. Thus being led by the Spirit they would not be under the compulsion of the law, since the Spirit in controlling their

desires would give them freedom.

To make the difference between living after the flesh and being led by the Spirit stand out more strikingly in their relationship to the law, Paul contrasted “the works of the flesh” with “the fruit of the Spirit.” “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 practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:19-23). His enumeration of the works of the flesh makes it evident to any observant person that people who practice such would have to be controlled by law, and his warning that “they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” certainly classes them as unlawful. In contrast to this, however, after describing the fruit of the Spirit he added “against such there is no law.” This being the case, it demonstrates the fact that the deeds of those who are led by the Spirit will be determined by the fruit of the Spirit and will need no law for control. Therefore those in whose lives the Spirit is fruitful have no need for a law of compulsion, for in them the law is already being fulfilled. Then to show that such was the demand of them as Christians, Paul wrote, “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof” (Gal. 5:24).

They that are Christ's today must not only have the Spirit of Christ but must be led by the Spirit through the working of the fruit of the Spirit. As already mentioned, we have not been given an analytical description of the Spirit of Christ or the Holy Spirit and some people may still be in doubt as to how the Spirit is received; but Paul's brief description of the fruit of the Spirit together with other related Bible teachings surely leaves no doubt that they that are Christ's, they that have an honorable place in this relationship, must have the Spirit. It also leaves no question about how the Spirit becomes effective and no lack of means for knowing whether or not one has the Spirit. Where the Spirit is there will be the fruit of the Spirit, and the tree is known by its fruit; therefore, he that hath not the fruit of the Spirit hath not the Spirit and "he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his." Thus the crucial test of the soundness of anyone's claim to a place in the Christian relationship and a right to the hope of eternal life is expressed in the question, "Does he have the fruit of the Spirit?" Then what could be more vital to us today than Paul's teaching on the fruit of the Spirit? May we study it prayerfully.

Let us observe a point or two of contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. First, the terms used to express the works of the flesh name or characterize activities while those that are employed to tell us of the fruit of the Spirit refer to personal qualities or characteristics revealing the nature of the individual. Second, the works of the flesh are similar in character but

not necessarily interrelated, but the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit are both similar in nature and closely interrelated. Third, one can practice some of the works of the flesh without doing them all and can fail to inherit the kingdom of God by practicing some of them or by practicing "such things," while the person who has the fruit of the Spirit will possess all of the qualities enumerated.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). In this description of the fruit of the Spirit, the first personal quality listed is "love," and while Paul makes no mention of the fact, it is apparent that love is requisite to the possession of all of the other attributes and when taken in its broadest application, would be deficient without them. Love as spoken of here comprehends the love for God and love for man and is the only antidote of love for self or selfishness which is the root from which the works of the flesh spring. We have further evidence of the importance of love as fruit of the Spirit in John's statement, "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). Since the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one and the same, surely "if we love one another," we can be assured that we have the Spirit of Christ today even though we have no miraculous power as evidence of its presence.

How can we ever doubt that love is the very heart of Christianity when John declares, "God is love and he that abideth in love, abideth in God and God abideth in him" (I John 4:16)? How can we believe this teaching and still be insensible to the aching void that exists today in the sacred relationship which we claim with God, with the Lord Jesus Christ, and with God's people? How can we give this teaching a place in our hearts and not be shocked at the shameful spiritual vacancy that is becoming so prevalent in this present day managerial type of religion? How long can we believe that we can have a place in the Christian relationship, that we are people in whom God abides and to whom he has given of his Spirit, when our love one for another is the evidence and yet we seem to be concerned with everything related to religion more than we are with the spiritual welfare of each other? How long are we going to entice people into our religious organizations by whatever means it may be done as the Gentiles were led away to idols (I Cor. 12:2), instead of bringing them to a true repentance through the power of the gospel? How long are we going to continue to reduce the confession of our Lord to a brief stereotyped form or to a mere assent to a statement of the truth, forgetful of the fact that the confession with the mouth is not unto salvation unless with the heart one believes unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10)? How long are we going to overlook the fact that the thing that is vital to one's salvation is not the mere act of baptism but that he be baptized into Christ, that he "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the

flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14)?

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 3

1. What is the spirit of the relationship?
2. What is said about the information we have relative to the Spirit?
3. What can you say about an exact description of God or of Christ?
4. What happens when we go beyond the information that we have?
5. How have some people distorted their conception of the work and influence of the Spirit?
6. Name three distinct purposes for which the Holy Spirit was given.
7. Give evidences that having received the Spirit did not keep people from turning away from Christ.
8. List three ways that the Spirit has been imparted to men.
9. Give two things relative to the Spirit of which there can be no doubt.
10. How did Paul show the Roman Christians that the Spirit of Christ must rule in their lives?
11. What influence of the Spirit did Paul make known to the Galatians?
12. What contrast did Paul make to show the difference between living after the flesh and being led by the Spirit?
13. What is the crucial test of the soundness of anyone's claim to having a place in the Christian relationship?
14. Contrast the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.
15. What is the only antidote for selfishness?
16. Give evidences that love is the very heart of Christianity.
17. List evidences of spiritual weakness in our present day religion.

LESSON 4

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Christian unity is also demanded by the relationship. It is demanded by the mission which Christian people are to fulfil, and probably the failure to accomplish it has been responsible for whatever degree of failure there has been in carrying out that mission.

In view of many of the discussions on the subject of unity, it appears in order that this discussion begin by pointing out the fact that there is a difference between Christian unity and church unity. The subject of unity has been discussed many times, but the major emphasis has generally been upon church unity; many have stressed the fact that there should be only one church and bemoaned the fact that we have so many churches in our country. Many seem inclined to blame the people of other churches for the lack of that unity for which Jesus prayed. Christian unity is broader than church unity. It is also deeper and richer and is necessary if church unity is ever to be accomplished. If we could secure church unity with the lack of Christian unity that we have today, I doubt that the situation would be much improved; and I am confident that we would be very little closer to the unity for which Jesus prayed. Even though Jesus' prayer that his disciples should be one has

been frequently pointed to in an effort to secure church unity, if every church in America today would accept the Bible just as it is taught and practiced by those who plead the loudest for one church, the Christian world would be little nearer if any to the unity for which Jesus prayed. So my appeal is for Christian unity.

May we now examine Jesus' prayer for unity with a prayer that we may fully understand it. After having prayed for the twelve, Jesus continued, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20-21). First let us observe that this prayer was for us—"For them also who believe on me through their word"—that is, the word of the apostles. Next let us be impressed by the fact that the purpose for unity among God's people was "that the world may believe that thou didst send me." This unity was prayed for that we may accomplish our mission, that we may lead the world to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was sent by the Father, that he was the Son of God. This is the reason I attributed whatever failure there might be in carrying out that commission to a failure in Christian unity. Now let us consider the unity for which Jesus prayed "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." This is the unity for which Jesus prayed, the unity of each disciple with him and God and with each other. I am persuaded that if each disciple is truly in unity with

Christ and God, we will have little trouble of being in unity with each other. An encouragement is given in the statement that follows: "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me" (John 17:22-23). We see the same emphasis here; we see the same sort of unity here. There is no reference to external church unity, but certainly if there is that unity that ought to be, church unity will be fully achieved. This is also shown by the declaration, "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:6-7).

Paul has given us further description of this unity for which Jesus prayed. Writing to one of the best congregations of which we have record, Paul made a very strong appeal to it for unity. He conditioned his appeal upon those values that they had surely experienced in their Christian relationship: "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions" (Phil. 2:1). Then he reinforced his appeal by indicating to these people who loved him that this would mean much to him, "make full my joy." Paul described the unity in these words, "that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2). He next mentioned individual practices to illustrate in terms of daily living: "Doing nothing through

faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). His naming these conditions at this time certainly indicated that there were such and that such things should have their influence with these people in helping them to do what Paul was teaching them to do; and unless we recognize these things in Christ; unless we find exhortation in Christ, consolation of love, fellowship of the Spirit and tender mercies and compassions to give tone to Christianity; unless we feel the influence of these things in our own lives, we are virtually sure to fail in the instruction which follows it. Paul's words, "same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," certainly give emphasis to the oneness that he would have them have. To show its meaning and practice he urged, "Do nothing through faction or vainglory." Leave those things out. Do not be self-seeking. It is the glory of God that Jesus came to seek and if we are one with him and with God, we will seek the same glory. Further, he stressed lowliness of mind, "each counting other better than himself." How much trouble would we have getting along with people if all of them counted us a little better than themselves; if they were willing to give us the place of honor; if they found joy in our happiness, in our good, rather than securing their joy from their own selfish accomplishments, and we did the same? Carrying the same idea further, "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

Not just wanting that which is good for you, not your own success, but in the Spirit of Christ looking to the things of others, trying to help them to have the things that they can enjoy and from which they can benefit.

After making these personal applications, Paul closed this part of his discussion by pointing to an example, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5); have the mind of Christ, the unity that Christ had with God; put the values where Christ put them; find our joy where he found his, in doing and even in suffering for others. He revealed the nature of the mind of Christ through the course which he had pursued: "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" (Phil. 2:6-7). Although Jesus was on an equality with God, he did not have that mind that was thinking of his own ease and enjoyment. He did not think selfishly of his high place. He did not lay hold on that or grasp that, but he emptied himself of that glory. His mind was an unselfish mind. His thinking was for the good of others and his thinking being for that, his action which followed his thinking was likewise for that. Here is the unity, or here are the elements that will bring about this unity for which Jesus prayed.

Paul gave the same basic teaching to the people at Rome, "Let love be without hypocrisy" (Rom. 12:9). That is, have the love that will cause you to act like you love, a love that will cause you to "Abhor that which is

evil and cleave to that which is good," a love that is real. He continued: "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:10-16). These practices show a closeness to each other, a consideration for each other, a helpfulness to each other. They describe people who certainly can get along and work together in unity, those that will have unity in spirit as well as unity of effort.

The same personal qualifications or characteristics that make for unity, along with an appeal for unity, were expressed by Paul to the Ephesians. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called" (Eph. 4:1). Note that that which he was going to say was that which will cause the Ephesians to walk worthily of their calling, to live in a way honorable to the Christian's station in life, to live like Christians ought to live. To this he added, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3). Unity of the spirit is the unity for which Jesus

prayed, not unity of organization, not unity of churches. Certainly, if we have unity of spirit, it will make unity complete.

This same emphasis is given in teaching to the people at Colossae. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-15). Paul lists here some of the things that we need to learn, that we need to have instilled in the hearts of people who call themselves Christians. These are some of the basic requirements of Christian character that will permit or cause people to get along with each other and to work together in unity: forgiveness as Christ forgave, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering. The people who have such qualities are people who have brought their selfishness under control, have crucified the flesh and are finding more of their joy in living for others. (See Rom. 14:17.)

Peter did not fail to emphasize the same lesson. After stressing the importance of living Christianity by showing its application in varied situations of life, Peter concludes, "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). We see Peter

stressing the same things that were listed by Paul; but observe the basis of his appeal, "that ye should inherit a blessing." These are the characteristics and practices that Christians need if they are going to inherit the blessings that have been promised to Christians. They constitute a necessary part of the conditions of salvation. More frequently we speak of the conditions of salvation as being faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, but the condition of eternal salvation as we have already learned is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his." These things listed by Paul and by Peter are characteristic of people who have the Spirit of Christ.

Another emphasis upon unity is given by Paul in this statement to the Philippians, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27). This statement gives us unity at work in a little different field. To be worthy of the gospel, they should stand fast in one spirit and with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel, that they should propagate the teaching of the gospel, that they should bring its influence into the lives of others. How can people be one with God who gave his Son that others might know the gospel and not be "striving for the faith of the gospel"? How can people be one with Christ who left glory and suffered on the cross that men might believe the gospel and not be "striving for the faith of the gospel"?

It is always fine in spiritual matters when we can have an example, and in the lives of the early disciples we have an example of this unity for which Jesus prayed. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32). Our oneness in personal interest is very objectively shown in terms of what we do to help other people, and under the circumstances of that day the help that seemed to be most needed frequently was financial help. The statement above does not necessarily imply that all of the Christians sold their property and put the money into a common treasury. We find that Barnabas sold a field and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:36). We also see that Ananias and Sapphira wanted the glory of such, but at the same time they wanted the money for their own use. So in their selfishness, they tried to get the glory of liberality, yet retained part of the money for their own use. It was in this case that Peter made it plain that there was no demand that they give the full price of the property to the apostles, that the property was theirs and even after they had sold it the money was still within their power (Acts 5:4). Certainly this case indicates that there was no effort toward a community treasury including all of the earthly possessions of Christians, but great unity of interest was shown by the fact that many people sold their possessions in an effort to help supply the needs of others.

This teaching should make it abundantly clear that in

order to attain unto the unity for which Jesus prayed, we must become the kind of people that Jesus wants us to be. Where people possess the basic Christian characteristics, where they are filled with the Spirit of Christ and moved by the love of God, unity will be the natural result; and it will never be obtained in any other way. May God grant us the wisdom to profit more fully from the great principle which Jesus declared, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). May we more realistically understand that Christian works are the works of Christians and we cannot hope for such works from any other source. From this great truth two lessons should be drawn: First, efforts that are expended in the interest of Christian unity should be dedicated to the task of making people truly Christian; and, second, the lack of Christian unity is unmistakable evidence of a lack of Christianity.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 4

1. In the many discussions of unity what has generally been the major emphasis?
2. Contrast church unity with Christian unity.
3. For whom was Jesus' prayer for unity?
4. And for what purpose was unity desired?
5. Describe the unity for which Jesus prayed.
6. Upon what did Paul condition his appeal to the Philippians for unity?
7. How did he describe this unity? Illustrate.
8. Upon what condition are we virtually sure to fail to follow Paul's instruction?

9. What Christian mental state does he stress, and what would result where it is found?
10. To what did Paul point as an example?
11. How did Paul express the same basic principle to the Christians at Rome?
12. How did Paul express this same teaching to the Ephesians?
13. Quote this teaching as Paul gave it to the Colossians.
14. Give Peter's teaching on this subject and point out the basis of his appeal.
15. What is the condition of eternal salvation?
16. In what other activity did Paul urge unity of Spirit and soul?
17. Show the inconsistency of claiming to be one with God and failing to comply with this teaching.
18. Where do we find an example of the unity for which Jesus prayed?
19. What does this teaching make abundantly clear?
20. Efforts toward Christian unity should be dedicated to what task?
21. The lack of Christian unity is evidence of what?

PART II

LESSON 5

A REDEEMED PEOPLE

We have learned from the preceding lesson that the mission of Christians, They That Are Christ's, is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We have also learned that this is to be accomplished through Christian living, by showing forth the excellencies of Christ. From these facts it is clear that only a Christian, one who is earnestly trying to follow the teachings of Christ, can ever accomplish this mission. Only the person who has the excellencies of Christ will ever be able to show them to others. This means that the people who are to accomplish this mission are those who possess the personal qualities and those who have acquired the necessary skills to do so. This means that the people of this relationship, They That Are Christ's, must be a certain kind of people who have their own characteristic attitudes and practices. This requires that they be learners of his teaching and become imitators of him. So Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Cor. 5:17); and to the Galatians, "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). Thus it is evident that the individual who has a rightful

place in this relationship must become a new creature. Therefore, it behooves those of us who call ourselves Christians to ascertain whether or not we have truly become new creatures. In order to do this it is necessary that we know the Bible description of those who are Christians or that we know the basic changes in those who have become such. We shall consider both beginning with the latter.

In studying the basic changes in those who are Christ's, we are not primarily concerned at the present time with the teaching that Christ was the sacrifice to take away sins; neither with the teaching on what to do that one's sins may be taken away, or what to do to become a Christian; but rather with the teaching that reveals the nature of the change wrought in those that accept Christ and enter into the true Christian relationship, those who have reason for their hope to enjoy the promises. In speaking of Jesus' sacrifice Paul said, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people for his own possession zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). To the Christians of Asia Minor, Peter wrote, "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. 1:18-19). From these statements it is clear that the people who are in the Christian relationship and have a right to the promises that have been revealed through Christ are people that have been redeemed; for Paul said

that Jesus gave himself for this purpose, and Peter assured Christians that they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

What is the significance of this? What is the meaning of this statement that Christians have been redeemed? The word "redeemed" means simply "bought back." So the statement means that Christians have been bought back. The practice of redeeming is a common practice among us. We may not always use this term to describe it. When any property is given into the possession of another as a matter of security or collateral for money borrowed, when the debt is paid the property is recovered or redeemed. It is then in possession of its former owner. For example, when a person who has left his watch with a pawnbroker repays the money that he borrowed and repossesses his watch, we say the watch has been redeemed from the pawnbroker. It has been "bought back." It is now in the control of the original owner. Likewise when man is redeemed he is "bought back" and is in the control of his original owner.

But someone may ask, "Who sold man? To whom was he sold? Or from whom was he redeemed? And how did it all come about? The case of man is somewhat different from that of the watch, yet it is strikingly similar in its basic character. The watch had no power of decision and consequently was completely under the control of its owner. Man was given the power and right of decision; therefore, God's control over him was dependent upon man's decision. Since God made Adam (Gen. 1:27) and Eve (Gen. 2:22), surely they belonged to God

and surely he had the full right of control. Also God blessed man with everything that was needful for his welfare. He placed Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden where grew "Every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Gen. 2:9), and surely his goodness and loving kindness gave him a place of honor and respect with Adam and Eve as long as these things were given true recognition in their thinking and so long as they were willing to abide by God's teaching. However, when Eve was tempted by the Serpent and, "Saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6); when she saw in the fruit things that she wanted, she was deceived about the matter and in her blindness turned away from God's teaching to follow her own judgment and to get for herself these things. Thus Eve did that which was evil to get what she wanted, and for some reason of which the record fails to speak Adam joined her in the matter. Years later Ahab the king of Israel followed the same pattern of behavior by a devious path (I Kings 21:1-16). Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth which was hard by the king's palace, and when he was unable to secure the vineyard by fair means he allowed his wicked wife Jezebel to secure it otherwise. After she had had Naboth put to death, Ahab went down to the vineyard of Naboth to take possession. Elijah the prophet met him there with a question from Jehovah, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession?" "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found

thee because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah" (I Kings 21:19-20). It is apparent that this description of Ahab's action is fully applicable to the behavior of Eve and Adam. They sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. She, like some of the false prophets of whom Peter wrote, "Followed the way of Baalam, the son of Beor who loved the hire of wrong-doing" (II Pet. 2:15).

When she did this, she removed herself from God's control and came under the control of her own evil thinking. She had rejected God's ownership and was controlled by her own evil lusts. For this man was cast out of the Garden of Eden and he has continued to be ruled over by his own lusts. Hence it is from these that man must be redeemed. This is just what Peter told the Christians to whom he wrote, "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 spot, even the blood of Christ" (I Pet. 1:17-19). They had been redeemed from their "vain manner of life handed down from the fathers," from living after their own lusts. Paul was also saying the same when he declared that Jesus "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). From these statements it is clear that man was not to be redeemed or bought back from a third party, but rather to be redeemed from iniquity to be bought

back from his own evil way of living, to be bought back to the control of Jehovah and consequently, to his possession.

Having learned that one is redeemed when he is bought back from his own way of living, from following after his own lusts, from doing the things that are displeasing in the sight of God, from all iniquity, we would like to know next how this is effected or accomplished. In the statement quoted above we see that Peter told the Christians to whom he wrote that they were redeemed with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ. But how could the blood of Christ redeem people? To whom was the redemption price paid? From what has already been said, it is clear that it was paid to no one. But it became sufficiently great and meaningful to all of those who recognized its true value to buy them back from their evil way of living to accept God's way. When an individual has come to know that he is in sin and believes in the power of the blood of Christ to take away sin also seeing in it the manifestation of God's great love for him, it becomes effective as an influence to turn him away from following his own lusts to following the teaching of Christ. Thus the goodness of God leads one to repentance (Rom. 2:4) by causing him to be sorry for the way he had dishonored and disrespected God who has loved him so much, and this godly sorrow works repentance (II Cor. 7:10).

This means that man's redemption is an individual matter and depends finally upon his believing the story

of Jesus with that degree of realism that he will turn away from himself and turn to God. It is true that the blood of Christ was shed nearly two thousand years ago and that it was shed for the sins of the world, "Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6). It did not redeem the world, for Paul also said, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). Paul did not say he has redeemed all from iniquity but "us (those who accepted the redemption price) from all iniquity." There is no mass redemption. The blood of Christ becomes effective as a redemptive price only to those with whom it has the power to turn them away from their iniquity, for this was the way that Jesus was to bless them. To this Peter testified in Solomon's porch when he said "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). Those whom Jesus had failed to turn away from their iniquity have not been blessed because they have not been redeemed. Jesus himself showed the necessity of this change on the part of those who would be his followers when he declared, "If anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). To deny oneself as Jesus was speaking is to give up one's right of control, to surrender to the rule of another. This is the change that each individual must make in the process of being redeemed. This does not mean that Jesus expects perfection of his people here, but if one has been redeemed he has resolved to leave all sinful ways, has set his heart on doing only what

God wants him to do, and is making an honest effort to do it.

Paul briefly recalled the picture of redemption to the attention of the Corinthians in these words: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; 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). He thus reminded them that the compelling force in Christian living was the love of Christ. And since Christ died for all who would accept him all such have died from their former manner of life. And the real purpose in his dying for all was that those who lived believing in him should no longer live unto themselves but should live unto him. Paul reminded the Roman brethren of this change by the question, "We who died to sin how shall we any longer like therein" (Rom. 6:2)? Then he proceeded to give further evidence of the fact that they had died. In urging the Colossians to set their minds on things above and live unto him, Paul reminded them, "For ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). In referring to the change in his own life, he wrote to the Galatian Christians, "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). These statements leave no doubt that those who have a rightful claim to

the Christian relationship have been redeemed, having been turned away from their former way of living, and are making an earnest effort to live as God wants them to live.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 5

1. Show that one must be a real Christian to be able to accomplish his mission.
2. How does Paul speak of such people?
3. Jesus gave himself for us to produce what changes in us?
4. What change in the Christians of Asia Minor did Peter speak of and how was it produced?
5. What does the word "redeem" mean? Illustrate.
6. Who owned man and why?
7. Upon what did God's control over him depend?
8. Who sold man and how did it happen?
9. What other Old Testament character sold himself after a similar fashion?
10. When man removed himself from God's control, he was under the control of whom or what?
11. From what must man be redeemed? And how did Peter express it?
12. By what were we redeemed and how was it brought about?
13. Show carefully that redemption is an individual matter.
14. How did Peter express the matter in Solomon's porch?
15. Give Jesus' statement that showed the necessity of redemption.
16. If one has been redeemed, what has he done and what is he doing?
17. Tell how Paul briefly recalled the picture of redemption to the attention of the Corinthians.
18. By what question did Paul remind the Roman brethren of this change?
19. What was his description of the state of the Colossians and of the Galatians?

LESSON 6

A PURIFIED PEOPLE

We have considered the teaching that Jesus “Gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” But this is not all that was to be accomplished by his sacrifice. Continuing that statement Paul said “And purify unto himself a people for his own possession zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). So he was to purify as well as redeem. He gave himself not only to buy people back from walking in their own way but also to purify them, to cleanse them from their defilement. In speaking of the Cretans with whom Titus was dealing, Paul showed that by giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men and turning away from the truths they would be defiled. For after telling Titus to reprove them that they not do it, he contrasted the condition of those who do such with that of the pure and then described their state directly. “For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abomina-

ble, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:13-16). A close examination of this picture certainly reveals the ugliness and worthlessness of professing to know God but disrespecting his teaching by following the commandments of men (our own way). As long as we are not redeemed, bought back, from following our own way we cannot be purified, for within ourselves is a perpetual source of defilement. Surely, this should impress us with the worthlessness of a nominal church membership and should arouse us to a recognition of the hopeless state of those who are indifferent to God’s teaching, for it is evident that they have neither become redeemed nor purified and therefore are not the people that are prepared for his possession.

We have seen that one’s being redeemed is dependent upon the power of the gospel in his heart, or his faith in the preciousness of Jesus’ blood, to turn him back to God, to restore God’s word to its place of honor in his thinking, and to impel his obedience to it. It will be helpful to our understanding to learn that one’s being purified is also dependent upon the power of the gospel in his heart, or his faith in the power of Jesus’ blood to impel his obedience to Jesus’ teaching. Peter made this clear when he reminded the Christians to whom he wrote how they had been purified, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth” (I Pet. 1:22). They had been purified in or through their obedience. Of course, he did not mean obedience alone, for obedience is never alone. Obedience is action, and action is always the result of some power or influence. The power that

causes man to act is conviction and assurance or faith (Heb. 1:1). Actions are always the works of faith, and we learn from James that faith is made perfect or complete in works or obedience (Jas. 2:22). What did they obey to purify their souls? They obeyed the truth. What is the truth? Jesus speaking to God said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). So they obeyed God's word. What part of it? Some people would say the commandment to believe, and others would say something else. But why guess? Is it not more reasonable to assume that these people did the part of God's teaching that they were told would purify or cleanse them by removing their defilement or sin? Then what were they told? They were told just what others were told, for all of the people who wanted to know were told the same thing. All of the apostles taught the same thing. It was first voiced by Peter in Jerusalem as he was guided by the Holy Spirit. "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). Since the people to whom Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth," were of the dispersion some of them may have heard the first announcement of this teaching. Furthermore, since Peter is the one who made this statement and also the one who announced the teaching, surely this is the teaching to which he referred, unless we assume that Peter has changed, which assumption would surely be unthinkable.

Reader, since we have no indication that Peter ever

changed nor did the other apostles, is it not reasonable to believe that our souls may be purified today in the obedience of this same teaching? And would it not be safer for us to accept the teaching of Peter when he spake by inspiration, instead of accepting a misinterpretation of what Peter taught made by men who are wholly without inspiration? We have every reason to believe that Peter was right and every reason to believe that those who fail to agree with Peter are wrong. Can you afford to gamble with your soul? Remember, Jesus gave himself that he might redeem and purify your soul for his own possession. Unless you have turned away from all iniquity to live according to God's teaching, you have not been redeemed. And unless you have obeyed the truth as revealed through Peter and the other apostles, he has not purified your soul. Unless you have been redeemed and purified, how can you hope to be among the redeemed?

We have seen that one cannot be purified unless he has been redeemed. Can one be redeemed without being purified? Strictly speaking the answer to this question is *no*. For if one is fully bought back or redeemed from the ways of men he will accept God's teaching through Christ and his apostles on purification and will purify his soul in obedience to the truth. However, speaking in terms of the change of mental attitude as it has been experienced by some religious people and especially as the matter is seen by them, it might be said that one can be redeemed or can think he is redeemed without being purified. By this we mean that a person may be moved

sincerely by the gospel story, believing Jesus to be the Christ the son of God and that his revelation of the great love of God is true, giving God's promise of an eternal inheritance an appeal that is sufficiently realistic to turn him away from himself with the resolve to live a life that will be pleasing to God. This basic change in purpose together with an honest effort to comply with the moral teachings of Jesus and a regular participation in worship activities has led many honest religious people to conclude that the purpose of Christ's coming has been fulfilled with them, that they have been redeemed and that they are God's people and heirs of his eternal promises. This is an unfortunate situation. They have substituted a part of the preparation to be God's people for all of the preparation to be God's people. They have failed to learn that Jesus gave himself to purify as well as to redeem. They have overlooked the fact that Paul not only wrote, "Who gave himself to redeem us from all iniquity" but also to "purify unto himself a people for his own possession." In order to be a people for his own possession, they must not only be redeemed or bought back from their former manner of life to live as God would have them live, but they must also be purified from the defilement of their former manner of living. They not only must change their attitude toward God and his teaching, change their minds, repent, but they must be cleansed from the defilement of the flesh also. They must purify their souls in their obedience to the truth as the Christians of Asia Minor did (I Pet. 1:22). They must do what Peter told those to do on the day of

Pentecost, "Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). This is the total change that is necessary. This is the individual picture of redemption and purification. When one is moved by the power of the gospel to turn from his old manner of life and to accept God's teaching fully, including his teaching on purification, being baptized into Christ, he has been fully redeemed and purified. Through this redemption there is also justification, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24); "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). It is clear that the obedience through which one is purified climaxes the full redemption by bringing one into Christ, "For in one spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13).

Since it is clear that Christ gave himself that he might redeem and purify a people for his own possession, it is reasonable to conclude that They That Are Christ's, those that have a rightful claim to the inheritance of God, must be redeemed and purified. Therefore, the vital question to everyone who makes this claim is, "Have I been redeemed and purified?" The most common support of an affirmative answer to this question in this generation seems to be the fact that one has embraced the doctrine and complied with the ritual that is acceptable to some religious group of people. This evidence that the answer is correct is dangerously unsafe, regardless of which reli-

gious group is being considered. It is in terms of superficial activity which rests heavily upon human judgment instead of the word of God and at best is fearfully misleading and will prove fatally inadequate.

After stating that Jesus gave himself to redeem and purify a people for his own possession, Paul made known the basic characteristic by which they could be identified, "zealous of good works." This describes the nature of those who have been redeemed and purified and are prepared for his own possession. Compliance with the outward form of purification is essential to preparation for his possession, but it is both meaningless and worthless unless one is truly bought back from his own way of living to live in accord with God's teaching; unless one has been moved by the love of God to love God and to love man with that earnestness that fires him with a zeal to do those things that are pleasing to God, to be "zealous of good works."

Since this is the description of those who are prepared for his own possession, of those who have been redeemed and purified, it may be used to determine the soundness of one's claim to be redeemed and purified, of one's claim to be prepared for his own possession, of one's claim to be Christ's. In view of this, the ultimate test of one's real place in the Christian relationship is expressed in this question, "Am I zealous of good works?" Every one who claims to be Christ's that is unable to answer this question, "Yes," should recognize his claim as being false and should be concerned over his spiritual status.

This test strikingly reminds us of the fact that there

are not only certain forms to be accepted, but certain changes to be made; not only certain processes to be complied with, but certain end results that must be attained; not only certain things to be done, but certain qualities to be acquired. One must not only be translated into the kingdom of Christ, but must partake of his nature. He must become Christlike. One must not only be in Christ, but Christ must be in him: "Or know ye not as to your ownelves that Christ is in you unless indeed ye be reprobate" (II Cor. 13:5); "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). He must not only have the Spirit of Christ, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9), but must be led by the Spirit of Christ or Spirit of God: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

"Am I zealous of good works?" is in itself a simple question, but as an instrument for self-testing it should be made vividly objective. To do this, we must concern ourselves with two terms, "zealous" and "good works." What does it mean to be zealous? What are good works? To be zealous is to be filled with zeal. Zeal is ardor in pursuit of anything, and ardor is fire or enthusiasm. Therefore, if I am zealous of good works, I am pursuing good works with fire or enthusiasm. What are good works? Good works are works that do men good. There are two kinds of good to be done, spiritual and physical, and strictly speaking there are two kinds of works that are good. However, since we are considering good works as Christian activities and as such they are means of

exerting Christian influence with the inherent purpose of doing people good spiritually, we shall make no attempt to separate the two in this discussion. Spiritual good works comprehend all works from which people derive spiritual benefits. They are works that either lead others to Christ or encourage, strengthen, and edify those who have already accepted Christ. They are works that make the values revealed in the gospel meaningful to people that they may know God and may be moved to serve him and to want to be like him. Basically they consist of learning, doing, and teaching the word of God, for these are not only the activities necessary to impart a knowledge of the gospel to others, but are the very activities through which those receiving it must come to recognize the values revealed therein to make them effective in their own lives and to be assured of the reality that they partake of the divine nature. They are the activities through which a Christian may let his light shine that "others may see his good works and glorify God." His study of the Bible at home and at church is the best way to encourage others to learn it. Regular and frequent participation in the worship activities, together with personal and financial ministrations to the needs of others, is the most effective way to show the gospel to be good tidings of great joy, and also the best way to train others in the practices that will "show forth the excellencies of Christ." From these statements it should be clear that if I am zealous of good works, I am enthusiastically pursuing the activities that will contribute to learning, doing, and teaching the gospel of

our Lord Jesus Christ. If I am not enthusiastically participating in these activities, then I am not zealous of good works. If I am not zealous of good works, I am not prepared for God's own possession. If I am not prepared for God's own possession, I am unworthy of the Christian relationship. If I am unworthy of the Christian relationship and am willing to continue in that state, what grounds have I to hope for the inheritance which is reserved for those who are prepared for God's own possession?

Reader, this is the crucial test. It is not the test of perfection. If it were, there could be no hope, but it is the test of faith. Those who truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, love God. They love their brethren, the children of God. They love God's creatures. They will find joy and, therefore, be enthusiastically interested in doing the things that please God and in doing the things that show their love for men. They will be impelled by the Spirit of Christ to work the works of God and not wait to be coaxed or threatened by their brethren. May God help us all to listen to the wooing of his Spirit.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 6

1. What did Paul say Jesus gave himself to do for people as well as redeem?
2. Give the description of the Cretans that reveals the ugliness of professing to know God but disrespecting his teaching.
3. What else does this show us to be worthless?
4. How did Peter say Christians had purified their souls?

5. What is never alone?
6. Show what truth these Christians had evidently obeyed.
7. What reasoning is given to show that we should obey the same truth?
8. Give reasoning to show that one cannot be redeemed without being purified.
9. Explain how some people have been led to believe that they have been redeemed that have not been purified?
10. What unfortunate mistake have these people made?
11. In order to be a people for God's own possession what must have happened?
12. Give the individual picture of redemption and purification.
13. In terms of this discussion, what is the vital question to everyone who makes the claim to be an heir of God?
14. What is the most common support of an affirmative answer to this question?
15. Why is this evidence that the answer is correct unsafe?
16. What is the characteristic by which those who have been redeemed and purified may be identified?
17. This being true, give another question that may be used as a test of one's real place in the Christian relationship.
18. What is it to be zealous and what are good works?
19. What are spiritual good works and of what do they consist?
20. What is the most effective way to show the gospel to be good tidings of great joy?
21. If I am zealous of good works what am I doing? If not, what is my state?
22. What is the crucial test of faith?
23. What will those do who truly believe Jesus Christ to be the son of God?

LESSON 7

A SANCTIFIED AND RECONCILED PEOPLE

In our study of the people who have truly entered into the Christian relationship, They That Are Christ's, we have learned that they have been redeemed and purified, that Christ gave himself for them that he might redeem and purify them for his own possession. We also learn from the Bible record that they were sanctified: "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). We are also told that it was for this purpose that Christ died: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). Not only are we told that Jesus suffered that he might sanctify the people and that Christians were sanctified, but we are shown that they must be sanctified if they are to enjoy the promises of the relationship: "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled" (Heb. 12:14). This statement certainly leaves no room for question. If we are to see the Lord and to

enjoy his blessings, we must be sanctified, and we must continue in that sanctification.

Unfortunately, the Bible teaching on sanctification seems to have been woefully misunderstood and fearfully mistreated. Some people have distorted the whole Bible doctrine of sanctification by changing it from its universal application, a requirement of all Christians (all that are Christ's) to a partial application expected of a special class only. They have made it the basis for an ecclesiastical classification and by the ritual of canonization have virtually nullified it as a teaching to the common people. By this practice sanctification has become a church honor humanly bestowed, instead of a personal quality divinely wrought through the power of the gospel. These people have left God's teaching and established their own system of religion. Since it does not follow the teaching of Christ, they have no right to be called Christians.

There are other religious people who have grossly misinterpreted the Bible teaching on sanctification. They respect it as a teaching that applies in the lives of individual Christians universally; but instead of understanding sanctification to be a personal quality of individual living that makes one worthy of his Christian relationship by being truly a new creature and living a Christ-like life, they seem to think of it as a sort of state of sinless perfection, acquired through a formal acceptance of the relationship, which permits the practice of wrongdoing with impunity. This idea may have resulted from a misapplication of Paul's quotation from David, "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. 4:7,8). This could have been avoided either by giving closer consideration to Paul's application or by completing David's statement which Paul quoted in part. David added, "And in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. 32:2).

There are still other religious people who have woefully neglected, yes, even largely ignored the Bible teaching on sanctification. Their major emphasis has been on doing instead of being, doing certain commandments instead of being a certain kind of people. They seem to have put their trust in their ability to comply with a limited Bible teaching that they have selected as being important, a sort of legalism, rather than seeking to be filled with the Spirit as Paul exhorted the Ephesians to do (Eph. 5:18), that they would love God and love man and show that love by seeking to be imitators of Christ doing the whole will of God from the heart. In their resentment toward the claim of the second class of religious people mentioned above, that they could not sin, they seem unconsciously to have adopted a misinterpretation of the teaching on sanctification that is about as far from the truth in the opposite direction. They do accept the doctrine of individual sanctification and occasionally teach on the subject, but they delete the major demand for holiness by overemphasizing the root meaning of the Greek word that is translated "to sanctify." They stress the meaning "set apart" and all but lose sight of the fact that Christians are set apart unto holiness as is shown by the context. Thus, they hold to a

form of sanctification having denied the power thereof, and when reprov'd for engaging in a practice that is unbecoming to a Christian, may attempt to side-step the issue by saying, "I'm no saint." Friend, is this the way you feel about it? Remember that if you are no saint, you are a sinner of the type that stands condemned.

In reality, the description of those in the Christian relationship, as "saints" or "sanctified" is practically the same as that expressed in the words "redeemed and purified." "Redeemed and purified" speaks of the detailed change in the individuals, while "saints" or "sanctified" indicates the total change in the people with reference to their new relationship; and, therefore, more strongly implies the obligation to perpetuate this state of holiness. As the word "sanctified" is used to describe Christians, it means "set apart" or "consecrated" or "hallowed" to the service of God. This is abundantly supported by the manner or the process through which people are sanctified.

In his prayer to the Father, Jesus plead, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Then he added, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19). From these statements we learn that people are to be sanctified through the truth. With this James agreed when he wrote, "Of his own will be brought us forth by the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). In telling Saul of Tarsus what he was to do for the Gentiles, Jesus said, "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). From this we see that people were sanctified by faith in Christ. Later Paul wrote about his work among the Gentiles in these words, “That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:16). We learn further from this statement that people are sanctified by the Holy Spirit or by the Spirit of Christ. We should observe, however, that the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit is in conjunction with or through the gospel of God. This is also suggested by Jesus’ declaration, “The words I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63), and is also indicated by Paul’s statement to the Christians at Thessalonica, “Knowing brethren, beloved of God, your election how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (I Thess. 1:4,5). We also read: “Then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:9,10); and “For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:13-14).

We then conclude that people are sanctified through Jesus' blood. To this Paul added other information when he wrote: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Here we have a brief statement of the manner or process of cleansing that was necessary to sanctification, "Washing of water with the word," which is in agreement with Peter's statement, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth" (I Pet. 1:22).

When we combine these various statements of how people are sanctified into one picture, it is easy to see that sanctification is brought about by the effective working of the power of the gospel in the hearts of men. When people believe the truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ, the son of God, manifested the love of God by giving his life that through his blood man might have the forgiveness of sin; and are moved by the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit, whose influence is brought into their lives by the conviction that the gospel story is true, they are caused through Godly sorrow to stop living according to their former lusts or desires. Showing their faith in the teaching of the gospel by pantomiming the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ by baptism, "by the washing of water with the word," they have been cleansed, they have been sanctified, they have been con-

secrated, having dedicated their lives to the service of God. If, however, a person has been moved to comply with the forms but not sufficiently moved to dedicate his life to holy living or holiness, he has not turned away from his idols to serve the living God, but has fallen short of sanctification and lacks that which qualifies him for a rightful place in the Christian relationship. He may have complied with a washing but not “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” of which Paul spake (Titus 3:5). From outward appearance we may conclude that he was baptized into one body, but it is very doubtful that he has complied with the Bible teaching, “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were made to drink of one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:13).

Reader, do you call yourself a Christian? Do you claim a place in the Christian relationship? Do you hope to enjoy the blessings of life eternal? If you do, then the important question to you is the question of sanctification. Have you been sanctified and have you continued to follow after that sanctification or holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord? The important question to you is not the one that is so frequently asked, “Are you a member of the church?” Nor is it the question, “Are you a member of the right church?” The important question to you is not, “Have you been baptized?” Nor is it the question, “Have you been baptized by immersion?” The important question to you is not, “Have you confessed Jesus as the Christ?” The important questions

to you are, "Have you been sanctified?" and "Do you maintain that state of holiness, having sanctified in your heart Christ as Lord?" (I Pet. 3:15). Have you made him the complete ruler in your life? Have you accepted him as the way of life? Are you following his teaching implicitly? If you are, all of the other questions asked have found a correct answer.

To emphasize further that holiness is a part of sanctification and is required of everyone who is worthy of the Christian relationship, your attention is called to these scriptures: "For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification" (I Thess. 4:7); "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification" (Rom. 6:19); "Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal" (II Tim. 1:9); "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye" (I Cor. 3:17); "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love" (Eph. 1:4); and "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1:14-16).

After considering these, recall again this statement, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27), giving special attention to the latter part. We note that in this exhortation to the Ephesians we are told that Christ gave himself to sanctify the church that he might present it to himself a glorious church holy and without blemish. We know that Paul was not speaking of Christ's sanctifying an institution or an organization, for this would be contrary to the very nature of the process of sanctification. We have seen that sanctification was through faith in the gospel, or the truth, and of necessity accomplished individually. Therefore, Paul must have been speaking of the people that make up the church, or the assembly, and by his statement indicated that Christ would have all who are a part of the church be holy and without blemish. It also implies that it will be necessary for all who have a part in the church when he presents it to himself as a glorious church to be holy and without blemish.

Unfortunately, there are too many people who do not teach this kind of sanctification. Can it be that they are afraid that their hearers will get the impression that Christianity will cost them something? Are they afraid for people to know that being a Christian is being dedicated to a holy way of living and demands a consecrated

prayerful effort day by day to live the Christian life? Is it possible that the preachers today are afraid that too many of their followers will turn back as did many of Jesus' disciples when he declared unto them, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves" (John 6:53)? (See John 6:66.) Surely it was not a premeditated act, but I have heard preachers give to their hearers a ready-made rationalization by which to excuse themselves from an honest effort to live holy lives. They have justified this sinful condition in the church on the grounds that the church is made up of human beings, "and God knows that human beings have human weaknesses." He certainly does. Jesus also knew that men had human weaknesses before he died for the purpose of sanctifying them and making them holy, and we should not forget that Peter urged the Christians to whom he wrote, "Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy, in all manner of living" (I Pet. 1:15). It is true that the church is made up of human beings and that they have human weaknesses and will make human mistakes; but if they are sanctified, if they are set apart to holy living, they will not be content to continue in such.

The Bible uses one other word to describe the basic change that must be made by everyone, or in everyone who is qualified for, or worthy of, a place in the Christian relationship. It is the word, "reconciled." This change is spoken of as being affected by God himself: "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation;

to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:18-19). It is also shown to be through Christ: "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 the cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. 1:19-20); and "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:9-11). From the last quotation we see that the change is from enemies to friends. This reveals the most personal character of the change. It is a change in the very nature of the individual. The word, "redeemed," indicates a change in ownership or control. The word, "purified," shows a change in condition. The word, "sanctified," makes known a change in purpose; but the word, "reconciled," designates a change in the very nature of the individual, a change from an enemy to a friend, a change from one who hates to one who loves, a change in attitude that naturally and normally produces a complete change in life.

In order that our picture may be more graphic let us recall our common use of the word, "reconcile," and con-

sider its application in this particular case. After two people have been friends and a difference or disagreement has arisen that is violent enough to disrupt their friendship and estrange them from each other; then the disagreement is adjusted, the effects of it removed, and the people are restored to their former friendly relationship, they are said to have been reconciled. When a man and his wife have allowed something to come between them and change the way they think of each other, something has changed their attitudes toward each other from the attitudes of friends to those of enemies; and some mutual friend succeeds in getting the matter adjusted and getting their thinking of each other and their attitudes toward each other changed to that of friends, we say that they have been reconciled.

In order to better understand the application of this word to the change that must take place in man with reference to God, let us review briefly man's past relationship to God. In our earliest record of man's history we find him in the Garden of Eden in what was evidently a friendly relationship with God. God had provided things for man's comfort and happiness, and man was respecting God's teaching or wishes as a friend would do; but when Eve was led by the serpent to think of the situation in terms of her own selfish interest and to evaluate things on the basis of her own wisdom, it seemed that she forgot her relationship to God and the great blessings which it provided. She failed to act the part of a friend, and when she ceased to act like a friend, as did also Adam, the relationship was destroyed, and

they were driven out from God that very day. Thus, the human family was estranged from God. The majority of the people of the generations that followed down through the years have remained estranged from God. They have continued to follow their own wisdom. They have used God's blessings selfishly, ignored his pleadings and spurned his love. God's ultimate plan of reconciliation is through our Lord Jesus Christ; so Paul declared, "We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ as though God were entreating by us," and made the plea that should go out to every human soul, "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

This is the most complete, the most accurate, the most realistic description of the change that must be accomplished in man before he will be received back into that sacred relationship with God. It simply requires that man reverse his course, that he return to God by the same path by which he left, that he restore the relationship which he destroyed when he ceased to be a friend by becoming an enemy. He must cease to be an enemy by becoming a friend. In order to do this he must change himself. He must change his attitude from that of an enemy to that of a friend. He must be a friend, not merely do an occasional friendly act. He must act like a friend on all occasions. To do this he must feel like a friend. A friend loves, so to be a friend of God, he must love God. He ceased to respect God's teaching as a friend when he came to love himself more than God. Before he is truly reconciled to God, before he is re-

stored to his place in that friendship, he must come to love God more than he loves himself. The vital question with us is, "Have we done this?" Do we love God more than we love ourselves? If we do, we have been reconciled to God. If we do not, we have not been reconciled to God. If we have not been reconciled to God, we are unworthy of the Christian relationship. If we have been reconciled to God, then we love God, and if we love God, we act like we love God. We seek to do just what God wants us to do, for love always seeks to please the one loved. This does not mean that a friend never makes a mistake or never does that which is displeasing to the one he loves, or never fails to do that which pleases the one he loves even when that one is God; but if he loves sincerely, he will not continue to do that which is displeasing. Neither will he continue to fail to do that which he knows to be pleasing.

The crucial test by which everyone may know whether he has been reconciled to God or not is provided in the following statement of the purpose for which Christ 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. 5:15). Those who have been truly reconciled to God by the love manifested in the offering of Christ will live unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. Just what does it mean to live unto him? An illustration from human experience might help us to understand. Sometimes we hear the statement made of a mother that "she just lives for that child." What is the situation that caused this to be said? Upon

inquiry we will always discover it to be a case of real sacrifice. It is evident that everything is done with the child's welfare and enjoyment in mind. The mother works and saves and denies herself not only the comforts of life but many things that she actually needs in order that the needs of the child may be well supplied. Her plans are always made with the child's welfare in mind, and her decisions are determined by whether or not the results will be beneficial to her child. Regardless of the occasion or the person with whom she is talking, her child is sure to become the topic of conversation before it is over, and it is easily clear to everyone that her happiness is for the most part dependent upon the happiness of her child. This is what is happening with the mother who lives for her child. The child has the first place in her thoughts, in her plans, and in her living. This will also be true of those who live unto Christ. Are we doing it? Have we changed from living unto ourselves to living unto him? Are his wishes the basis of our decisions? Is his glory the purpose of our lives? Do we find joy in doing the things that he would have us do? If so, we have been reconciled to God and are a people prepared for his own possession.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 7

1. Give Bible evidence that Christians are sanctified.
2. How have some people distorted the whole Bible doctrine on sanctification?
3. How have other people grossly misinterpreted the Bible teaching on sanctification?

4. How have still other religious people mistreated this teaching on sanctification?
5. State how "sanctified" is related to "redeemed and purified."
6. Tell carefully how one is sanctified.
7. If you have your hope set on eternity, what is the important question with you, and what is it not?
8. Give scriptures that emphasize further that holiness is a part of sanctification.
9. How do we know that Paul was not speaking of Christ's sanctifying an institution?
10. What rationalization has been used to justify the sinful condition in the church?
11. Give another word that is used in the Bible to describe the basic change that must be made by or in everyone who is worthy of the Christian relationship, and how is this change brought about?
12. What is the change indicated by this word and what are the other changes that have been discussed?
13. Briefly state two cases that illustrate the use we make of the word "reconcile" in human relationship.
14. Recount the story of man's early history that shows his need for reconciliation to God.
15. Describe this change more fully and its effects in the life of the one that is reconciled.
16. What does it mean to live unto Him who for our sakes died and rose again? Illustrate.

PART III

LESSON 8

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

In this subject we are speaking of the real work that should be accomplished by Christians: the real work that is to be done. Our understanding of the Christian mission will be helpful to us in understanding the teaching that leads to the accomplishment of that mission and aid us in making decisions where there are no specific teachings. We will begin our study with an examination of Jesus' treatment of the matter in the Sermon on the Mount. In the first part of this sermon we are given what is known as the Beatitudes. There are two things emphasized in the Beatitudes. One is that there is a people that are to be blessed or happy. The other point of emphasis in the Beatitudes is that they are to be people of a particular character. These two points are illustrated by the first Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). Here is stated what the blessing is—the kingdom of heaven and also the class of people that shall have that blessing—the poor in spirit. In the different Beatitudes the blessings are variously expressed and varying qualities of the individuals are named. It is clear that these wonderful blessings are for a certain class of people, people who have

certain personal characteristics, people with a certain class of interests. This is a wonderful beginning of an extensive treatment of Jesus' teaching, the longest single presentation of which we have record.

In the Beatitudes Jesus holds up to these people the opportunity of most wonderful blessings. At the same time in a most unusual manner of presentation he reveals the fact that they are to be enjoyed only by those who possess certain personal qualities. These two things should be kept in mind as we study the Christian mission. Blessings and promises offered to Christians are great, indeed, but they are only for Christians. The conviction of these two great facts should go hand in hand. It is necessary that man have a genuine living conviction that the Christian reward is wonderfully great; then the temporal attractions of life in reality will appear small in comparison. Then he will be led to give them up willingly, even gladly, in the hope of enjoying the greater divine blessings, even though he may be reproached by others for following such a course. At the same time it is imperative that he recognize that these blessings are for Christians, for people who will give up their own ways and be led by the divine teachings or by the Spirit of Christ. They are not for those who have rejected Christ, neither for those who have nominally accepted the gospel; but for those who have a real faith in God. We should not overlook the fact that those who have a real faith like Abraham, a faith that will save, will act like Abraham who always put God's way first; that those who believe in Christ as did Moses will see the great

values in him as did Moses who accounted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than all of the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:26) and gave them up; and that those who have a real faith in Christ like Paul will count all things but refuse that they may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of their own but the righteousness which is from God by faith (Phil. 3:8-9).

After dramatically depicting in the Beatitudes the greatness of the Christian reward and the personal characteristics of those who would receive it, Jesus turned immediately to the task of impressing his disciples with their mission. This mission Jesus strikingly sets forth in two figures: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men"; "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16). If we are to comprehend these statements of the mission that must be accomplished by those who honorably sustain the Christian relationship, we must fully understand its true nature. In order to do this there are at least three things that must be carefully considered.

First let us observe that although the emphasis in the Beatitudes which preceded this statement stresses the greatness of the blessing to be enjoyed and the personal

characteristics of the people that would enjoy them, this statement of the Christian mission is expressed neither in terms of seeking the reward nor of acquiring the personal characteristics necessary to those who will enjoy the reward. The mission is not self-seeking in its character. It is not expressed in terms of accomplishment for oneself, but rather in terms of helpfulness to others. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world." Pursuing an activity, the direct goal of which is only to supply one's own personal needs or fulfill one's personal desires is a selfish activity and so long as one is engaged in activity that is wholly selfish, he is acquiring those selfish characteristics that are diametrically opposed to the traits of Christian character. So long as one's effort is consciously and narrowly directed toward the goal of saving himself, he is being led by the mind of the flesh and not by the mind of the Spirit. He is lacking in the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is not dwelling in him and consequently he is not Christ's. The only way a person can save himself is to yield his own way to be led by the Spirit of Christ which impels him to seek the salvation of others.

The second thing which should be observed in this statement of the Christian mission is set forth in the first figure used. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). From this figure it is unmistakably clear that the disciples are to be the saving power. We know from the Bible record that

Jesus came into the world to save the world. He came as a sacrifice for sin. He came to turn people away from their iniquities. He came that people might have life. He came to be a savior, but when he had established his teaching, when he had fulfilled the prophecies, when he had become the offering for sin, we find that he charged the disciples whom he had especially selected and trained to wait in Jerusalem until they received that special power, and then they should begin their real mission of being the salt of the earth. They were to give the gospel, the glad tidings, to men, and when they were equipped, we find that they began. They and the other disciples that had followed them have become the salt of the earth. This is still true of Jesus' disciples today.

From this fact that disciples or true Christians are the salt of the earth, it is evident that they enjoy a most wonderful privilege and also a fearful responsibility or obligation. They have been entrusted with that which has the power to save men's souls. Theirs is the privilege of making known the glad tidings, of bringing the greatest joy into the human life, of imparting to their fellows the hope of eternal life. What privilege could be greater? On the other hand since it is true that the disciples of Christ are the salt of the earth, the saving power residing in them, surely being led by the Spirit of Christ they must recognize the gravity of their responsibility. The salvation of the world is depending upon them. If they fail, there is no one to succeed. If the person who believes the gospel, who has put his trust in the gospel, does not pass its blessings on to others, how can we

expect it to be done? Does the infidel or the unbeliever make an effort to save the souls of others when he has rejected the teaching for the salvation of his own soul? Certainly not. The responsibility is ours and if we are led by the Spirit of Christ, we will make an honest effort to fulfill it.

It is true that this is the responsibility of the disciples of Christ as a group, but every thinking person recognizes that it will be accomplished only through the personal efforts of individuals. Unless each individual meets his responsibility, the group responsibility will not be met. It is recognized by all who know the Bible that the privileges of Christianity are primarily individual and likewise the responsibilities.

Sometimes we hear a person say when there is a serious operation to be performed upon some friend, probably a brain operation, that he would not want to be in the physician's place, that he would not want the responsibility of such a delicate operation where a very small mistake could mean the death of the patient. What if a bit of carelessness resulted in the death of that person? Certainly the matter is serious, but in comparison to this what about the failure of Christians in their mission? The result of such a failure might be far greater. The physician by his failure would take away only a few years of temporal life at the most, but if Christians fail to fulfill their responsibility, it may mean taking away eternity not for one but perhaps for several.

A grave responsibility of each individual Christian is well suggested in this story. It was told as a true story.

I do not know whether it is a true story or not, but it well impresses the point. The scene of it is in the state of Kentucky. A man who had not lived as he should came to the end of the way. All of the people in the community were aware of the fact that his life was far from what it should have been. Regular arrangements were made, however, for his funeral, and a preacher who was known in the community was invited to preach it. In the meantime there were heard many expressions of sympathy and pity for the preacher, "What could he say at such a funeral?" When the time came the casket was rolled into the meeting house, the flowers were arranged, the songs were sung, and the preacher arose to begin his task, the nature of which had aroused much sympathy on the part of some of his hearers. The preacher began by reminding his audience of the fact that this man was beyond his reach, that his destiny was already determined, that there was nothing that he could say or do that would influence it in the least. He also mentioned the fact that these people knew this man's life and that they knew in the light of their Bible understanding that he was going to a hopeless grave. As is generally the case under such circumstances, the speaker turned his attention to the living. He asked them a personal question, a question that no doubt caused those who had sympathized with the speaker in his very difficult situation to shift their concern to themselves: "I would like to know which one or ones of you are responsible for this man's going to a hopeless grave?" This was an extremely searching question. It revealed

a responsibility in which some or someone had failed. His implication was that probably the life of some man and the failure of some man, or the lack of influence that could have been exerted by some man to start this man in the right direction or to recover him from his turn to the wrong direction, was responsible in a large measure for this situation. This question came to those people too late. Whoever had failed so far as this man was concerned had failed. Can it be that we are failing after a similar fashion? Let us not overlook our responsibility as Christians. If salvation is accomplished, it is wonderful. If we fail, it is fearful.

The third thing that should be observed in considering Jesus' statement of the Christian mission is the major point of emphasis in his second figure. He declared in speaking to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." Then he proceeded to say that which would prepare them for the real lesson which he desired to teach. He reminded them that a city set on a hill cannot be hid. It will be seen by everyone. It does not have to be pointed out in order for people to see it. He next spoke of the customary practice with reference to that which gives light. "Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house." The accustomed place for the lamp is on the stand and as the city on the hill, it will be seen. Its presence does not have to be announced. These two simple illustrations prepared for his conclusion. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father

who is in heaven.” In this his emphasis is on the manner of accomplishment, the way to fulfill that mission, the way to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

This conclusion parallels the illustrations. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men.” He did not say, “Make your light shine before men.” A person who has the Spirit of Christ does not have to make forced effort to show Christianity in his life. He does not have to do things just to be seen or to influence others. Neither does he have to proclaim his good works as some of the scribes and Pharisees did in Jesus’ day. A Christian light is like a city set on a hill. It cannot be hid. It is like a lamp put on a stand. It shineth unto all who are near.

How will this fulfill the Christian mission? Through the results that follow, “That they (men) may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” This is the true emphasis in fulfilling the Christian mission. I fear sometimes we have shifted the emphasis and put it on the teaching side of the matter. We have tried to tell people the things that they ought to do rather than to show them the things that they ought to do. Jesus here says nothing about preaching or teaching in this particular statement. He does mention it a little later in his sermon. It is not to be left out of course. It is very important, but it is only one of the activities of Christian living, and on many occasions Christian teaching lived is far more impressive than Christian teaching verbally expressed. A sermon is much more readily seen than it is heard. So Jesus’ teaching here is on showing the world

Christianity and not merely telling them about it. This is the greatest need of our day. Too frequently our preaching becomes divorced from our practice. Our church life has come too much to be our life at church and not our life wherever we go, and whatever we do. Probably too many times we put our emphasis upon the instruction which Jesus gave to his apostles after his resurrection, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15), and overlook this basic teaching that was given to these men earlier, that was imperative if their preaching was to be effective. There are many people today who give money even liberally to support the preacher and to build the church house but neglect Christianity so much in their daily lives that their church efforts are virtually neutralized. We should never forget that there is but one way to accomplish this mission, there is but one way to fulfill the fearful responsibility of the Christian relationship, and that is to "let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." This can never be accomplished merely by giving money. We must give ourselves to the Lord in doing the things that will make us the kind of people God wants us to be. We must acquire the characteristics given in the Beatitudes if we are to enjoy the blessings described therein.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 8

1. An understanding of the Christian mission will be helpful to us in what?

2. What are the points of emphasis in the Beatitudes?
3. What two things should be kept in mind as we study the Christian mission?
4. What will result from a real conviction that the Christian reward is great?
5. This reward will be received only by what kind of people?
6. What did Jesus present immediately after the Beatitudes?
7. Jesus' statement of the Christian mission following the Beatitudes is not expressed in terms of what?
8. How only can one save himself?
9. What is the major point of emphasis in speaking of Christians as the salt of the earth?
10. What does this figure suggest relative to the Christian's privilege and responsibility?
11. How only can this group responsibility be fulfilled?
12. What comparison is used to show the seriousness of the Christian responsibility?
13. What story is told to point to the personal character of the Christian responsibility?
14. What two illustrations did Jesus use to prepare his disciples for his instruction to them as the light of the world?
15. What was Jesus' instruction and what did he not say?
16. Where does this place the emphasis in fulfilling the Christian mission?
17. Our church life has become too much what?
18. How have many people virtually neutralized their church efforts?
19. What one thing is basic to fulfilling our Christian mission?

LESSON 9

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION (Continued)

The comprehensive nature of this teaching as it applies to the lives of Christians is repeatedly expressed in the New Testament scriptures. Paul wrote, "Do all things without murmurings and questionings; 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). Here Paul urged not only that they do all things but that they do them without murmurings or questionings that they may become blameless and harmless children of God, that they may be without blemish even though they are surrounded by a crooked and perverse generation, that they may manifest the Spirit of Christ. Paul informed Titus, "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). Peter declared to the elect of Asia Minor, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

Here he reminded the people of their wonderful relationship, an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. Then he stated the obligation that was inherent in the relationship that they might show forth the excellencies of Christ. This is still the obligation of Christians today to show forth the excellencies of Christ, not just to talk about them, not just to preach the gospel of Christ. It is the responsibility and the work of every person in this relationship to seek to live a Christ-like life, a life in which the excellencies of Christianity may be seen. As shown by Paul in his statement to Titus, the principal mission of the Christian life is living—living in such a way that Christ may be seen living in you. It is no wonder that Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

This demand for Christ-like living is made even more impressive by showing its effectiveness through its application to some of the concrete situations of life. The first case to which your attention is called shows the greater effect of living than of preaching in the matter of conversion. Peter wrote, "In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God

a great price" (I Pet. 3:1-4). This statement is rather detailed in its character to stress to these wives whose husbands had not accepted Christianity the fact that their manner of living might win those who had not been won by the preaching of the gospel and the details given make it plain that the wives were to live in such a way that their husbands could see the attractiveness of the excellencies of Christ rather than exaggerating their personal attractiveness to win the praise of their husbands.

Another case illustrating the effectiveness of Christian living in turning people to God is expressed in these words, "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, that they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2:11-12). Peter here tells these Christians that they should live after such a manner among the Gentiles that their behavior would be seemly, would be fitting, would be appreciated, that they may cause those among the Gentiles who speak against them as evildoers to change and to glorify God in the day of visitation. This is still the most effective way to stop those who speak evil against you. The best way to influence the people who are living in a manner that is displeasing in the sight of God, the people who have refused to accept God, is to live Christianity and to live it in such a way that evildoers can see the good that is in it and can be influenced by the excellency of Christ. The example of Daniel could well be followed.

His enemies could find no fault in him (Dan. 6:4-5).

After having told these Christians that the best way to stop the evildoers from among the Gentiles from speaking evil of them was to live such Christian lives that they would turn away from their evil and glorify God, the writer seems to turn to a specific case. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Pet. 2:13-17). This admonition seems to suggest that there has been particular criticism of some of the Christians relative to their relationship to civil government. It may have been that some of the Christians of that day had been careless about their relationship to the civil authorities even as some of the Christians are today or that some disrespected it because it was pagan. So Peter insists that they "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." This leaves a Christian no excuse for disrespect for civil authority. So Peter points very emphatically to another application to Jesus' teaching, "Let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Right living in their relationship to civil government would put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. The principle can be applied in all the relationships of life and in respect to all of the

false accusations or the disrespectful rumors that might be circulated to reflect upon the behavior of those who call themselves Christians. It is another field in which the excellencies of Christ can be shown.

Paul gave a similar instruction to Titus. "In all things showing thyself as an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us" (Titus 2:7-8). It is true that this statement was made to a preacher, and it refers in part evidently to his manner of preaching or dealing with the truth. But it also shows a means of meeting a practical situation. Those who would oppose, those who are of a contrary part, finding no evil they could talk about or to justify the evil report that they were peddling, would be ashamed. When in his heart one was wanting to represent the individual Christian as being evil, the failure to find evidence, the awareness that other people will not see the evidence, is enough to make such a person ashamed and consequently cause him to discontinue his efforts that were unjustifiable.

Paul instructed Titus to teach the aged women "That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be soberminded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5). From this instruction it is clear that a wife could live in that relationship such a way as to cause the word of God to be blasphemed. This would be the cost if she

failed to live as a Christian ought to live fulfilling the obligations of the family relationship. The Christian living of the wife who represented Christ in that home was to be such that the word of God would not be belittled, besmirched or blasphemed. This same admonition could be applied to Christians living in all other relationships. When people who call themselves Christians fail to show the excellencies of Christ but show that which is of the opposite character, the Word of God is lowered in the eyes of the people, and such living may even cause some to blaspheme. We learn from Paul in the Roman letter that the Jews had lived in such a way as to cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom. 2:24).

There was one other relationship that was held by Christians that offered more than average difficulty to them that would live Christianity. That was the relationship of servants or slaves. But even those conditions of life did not excuse one from living Christianity. In Paul's letters he gave special instruction to servants who were Christians exhorting them to live the Christian principles in what were frequently very hard situations. He encouraged them by reminding them of the fact that if they did that which was good, they would receive again from the Lord whether they were bond or free. "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as

unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph. 6:5-8). "Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22-24). In writing to Timothy, he warned that the failure of servants to do such would cause the name of God and the doctrine to be blasphemed. "Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed" (I Tim. 6:1). If the servants who called themselves Christians failed to live like Christians, they could cause this blasphemy. We should not overlook the fact that regardless of how menial our relationship, regardless of the type of work we are doing, we should work as unto the Lord.

Paul also instructed Titus, "Exhort servants to be in subjection to their masters, and to be well-pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9-10). This is probably the most comprehensive appeal for Christian living that we find in the whole of the New Testament related to slaves or bondservants. They should show all good fidelity and for what purpose? To adorn

the doctrine of God in all things. If slaves in their relationship with probably no money and little time that they could call their own could adorn the doctrine of God, how much more should people who live in a free country, should people who own possessions and whose time is their own, do about the matter? If slaves were called upon to adorn the gospel in that day surely we are expected to do as much. Let's not confuse the word adorn with the word don. To don means to put on. To adorn means to beautify. This is not speaking of putting on the gospel, but it is telling those who have put on the gospel to beautify it, to make it appear beautiful to those who behold it in their lives. Think of the obligation of a slave to make Christianity appear beautiful, or probably we should say, to live in such a way as to permit the beauty of Christianity to be seen in his life, for Christianity itself is beautiful. All we need to do to make Christianity beautiful is to live it, to let it be seen as it is, to manifest the Spirit of Christ, and it will be beautiful. It will appear beautiful even unto those who have rejected it and they will turn and glorify God.

The urgency for Christian servants to live Christianity is stressed further by Peter's exhortation to them even when their masters were hard or cruel, even when they suffered as a result. "Servants be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 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, this is ac-

ceptable with God" (I Pet. 2:18-20). Use the opportunity by living a Christ-like life that they may see your good works through the light of the gospel which shines through you in your deeds day by day, whatever may be your relationships, and they will be constrained to glorify your father who is in heaven. There are many other ways to emphasize the Christian mission, but these are sufficient to show that the most effective way, in fact, the only way to be the light of the world, the only way to accomplish the Christian mission is to live Christianity.

Living Christianity is a very complex activity. It consists of the performance of a wide variety as well as a large number of acts that have become effective through the development of divinely directed skills, the practice of which is motivated by attitudes that have been acquired through the establishment of values that have been made personal by a living faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Therefore, success in Christian living, success in being the light of the world is attained in the same way that success is realized in any other field of endeavor. Thus it is unmistakably clear that if Christians are to accomplish their mission, it is imperative that they acquire the attitudes and skills that are necessary to Christians. Since being the light of the world is a joint responsibility, this means that each Christian has a two-fold obligation in the matter. First, he should do everything he can do to qualify himself to live the life of a Christian, and, second, he should seek to aid every other person who has entered the Christian relationship to be able to fulfill his obligation to do the same thing.

The kind of living that is necessary for those who would fulfill their mission to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world is summed up in this declaration by Paul, "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). The completeness of the challenge is expressed by Peter in these words, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9). The real mission or goal of the Christian in terms of his own life is to "show forth the excellencies" of Christ. One of the most personal and most heart-searching questions that should come to everyone who claims a part in that sacred relationship called Christianity is this, "Am I sincerely seeking to show the excellencies of Christ?" If the answer is "No," how can the one giving the answer honestly hope to enjoy the blessings of the Christian relationship? How can one who is not trying to fulfill his mission as a Christian expect to enjoy the promises? Reader, what is your answer?

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 9

1. Give further evidence of the comprehensive nature of this teaching from the writings of Paul and Peter.
2. By Peter's instruction to wives, show the advantage of living over teaching.

3. How did Peter teach the Christians to lead evildoers to glorify God?
4. How were Christians taught to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men?
5. In what relationships can this principle be applied?
6. What special use did Paul teach Titus to make of Christian living with reference to them who are of the contrary part?
7. What reason did Paul give for having the aged women to train the young women in Christian living?
8. How does Paul show the urgency of Christian living by slaves or bondservants?
9. Whom does Paul instruct or exhort to adorn the doctrine and how?
10. Why should we be able to do better?
11. How did Peter reason to show servants that they should live Christianity even if it caused suffering?
12. What is one of the most personal questions that should come to everyone who claims a part in the Christian relationship?

LESSON 10

KEEP THYSELF PURE

This is the obligation of every Christian. It is demanded by his relationship to God. If one is to be a member or a part of a glorious church, it is obligatory that he keep himself pure. If one is going to serve as a priest and have the privilege of worshipping God, it is necessary that he keep himself pure. If one has been redeemed and purified and in any measure shows forth the excellences of Christ, it is imperative that he keep himself pure. If one is to contribute to the Christian mission of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, he cannot neglect his obligation to keep himself pure; for this must be accomplished by adorning the doctrine of Christ through living Christianity. Surely there is no serious minded person who can give sober consideration to these facts as they apply to him in the Christian relationship and not be moved by the very nature of the situation to maintain that purity and holiness of life demanded by the Christian relationship. Certainly this will be the case with all of those who have made the relationship sufficiently vital unto themselves to support an honest hope that they will enjoy the blessings and privileges provided by the relationship. Undoubtedly those who have come to recognize the

goodness and love of God in providing the way in which they have been privileged to enter into the wonderful relationship, becoming children of God and heirs of eternal life, and partakers of his divine nature will seek to maintain that purity and uprightness of life that will to some degree make them worthy of the relationship. In fact, a failure to do this is unmistakable evidence either that one has not been bought back to God, has not been redeemed, or that he has again fallen victim to his own human lusts and is serving the god of this world instead of the God of heaven. He is no longer faithful to his relationship.

The Apostle John briefly sets forth this natural consequence in his first epistle. He first points to the relationship that has been granted unto us as evidence of the greatness of God's love. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God and such we are" (I John 3:1). Then he declares "we know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3:2). Next he states the result of such a confidence when supported by a true faith in this relationship. "And every one that hath this hope set on him purified himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:3).

The Apostle Paul appealed to the Christians at Corinth to cleanse themselves and made this same relationship the basis of his appeal. By the use of a quotation from God's former teaching, Paul showed the relationship to be conditional. "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no

unclean thing: and I will receive you. And will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:17-18). Then he made his appeal in these words: “Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1). In his appeal to the Christians of Asia Minor on holy living, Peter also called to mind the graces or blessings that were to be received through the Lord Jesus Christ and appealed to them in terms of their relationship to him who is holy. “Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:13-16).

Further examination of the appeal of these three great apostles John, Paul, and Peter to Christian people to purify themselves, reveals the fact that the Christian relationship does not demand that one only purpose to cleanse himself from the wickedness of the world, but rather that he set his heart upon complete purification that he may show forth the excellencies of Christ. John declared, “And everyone that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3). Paul urged, “let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God”

(II Cor. 7:1) and Peter plead "But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (I Pet. 1:15).

Peter also shows the earnestness with which this holiness should be sought and the necessity for it by saying "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). To these we should add the testimony of James, "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 order that one's religion be unadulterated and uncontaminated, he must keep himself unspotted from the world—not just clean off the big spots but keep unspotted—clear of all spots.

Lest someone should make the mistake of concluding from these statements that God expects of his people sinless perfection, it is well that we call to mind a statement or two from the Apostle John on the matter. In the same epistle where he declared, "And everyone that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:3), in speaking of Christians he also wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8-10) and "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man

sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (I John 2:1-2). In these statements the apostle not only makes it clear that Christians may sin but also that Christians do sin and that denying our sinfulness is not an evidence of our righteousness but rather evidence that “the truth is not in us” and that “his word is not in us.” In fact, denying our sins does not bring us to forgiveness but rather removes us farther from it. John also makes it clear that it is God who forgives and who cleanses from unrighteousness. But that both the forgiveness and the cleansing depend upon man’s action in the matter which is briefly described here by the word “confess.” From the context it is evident that the word “confess” is used here in contradistinction to the practice of denying the presence of sin. This in no wise implies that the mere admission of sin would result in forgiveness and cleansing, but rather since they claim to have fellowship with God the recognition of their sinfulness, that they were not doing the truth, would move them to repentance causing them to walk in the light that the blood of Jesus might cleanse them from their sins.

From this discussion three things are clear: first, even though the Christian seeks earnestly to “abstain from every form of evil,” he cannot keep himself pure by virtue of his power to live without sin. Second, he cannot in and of himself purify himself but he must be purified through the blood of Christ. Third, the forgiveness and cleansing of a Christian when he sins is

dependent upon his own action in the matter. By these facts we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that in order for anyone to comply fully with the teaching to "keep thyself pure" or "keep oneself unspotted from the world," since he cannot live wholly without sin, it is necessary that he resort to the practice of cleaning up when he sins.

The matter of the Christian, the one who has become a member of God's family, the divine family, keeping himself unspotted from the world is similar in some respects to that of the child in the human family keeping himself, his person, and his clothing unspotted from the filth and dirt of this physical world. We sometimes hear it said of a certain mother that she surely keeps her child clean. If we inquire as to how she does it, we will learn that her procedure is made up of two parts: she trains the child to be careful not to get spotted, but when he fails and the spots begin to appear, she cleans him up again. This is the only way she can keep him clean and likewise it is the only way that a child of God can keep himself clean. The more successful the mother is in training the child as to where he plays, with what he plays, and how he plays, the less frequently he will become spotted and the less the need for cleansing. But regardless of how good his training and how much effort he makes to follow it even though he enters into the selected activities of children's play under reasonably well guarded conditions and employs above average care, by accident or otherwise he gets the spots. If his training is lacking in effectiveness, if he is distracted from his accustomed

effort to be careful or if he has ventured into the wrong place, or allowed himself to get into the wrong game or to play with the wrong thing his spots will appear more quickly and he will have to be cleaned up more frequently if he is kept clean. Likewise the child of God has been given instruction as to where to go, what to do, and how to do, to keep himself unspotted from the things of this world. The more he knows of God's instruction and the more diligent he is in applying it in his own life the better trained he will be, the greater care he will exercise and the less spotted he will become. But too frequently the instruction has not been taken personally or his attention has been distracted and his care in following the instruction has diminished or he has been tempted to venture into the wrong place, to associate with the wrong people or enticed to do the wrong thing and thereby has become spotted by the things of the world. If he is in any sense to keep himself unspotted, he must clean up frequently. The young child who has just reached the age and physical development at which he is able to move around freely and handle whatever he may find within his reach, but has not become old enough to distinguish between things that will soil or spot and those that will not, or before he has learned what to avoid or how to avoid becoming spotted or soiled, is the one who must be cleaned up more frequently if he is to be kept clean. The same is true of the younger members or children in the family of God. It is the natural consequence that they will need to clean up more frequently in order to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

There is one definite point of contrast between maintaining cleanliness in the earthly family and in the divine family. In the earthly family, where the children are small, or young, or even when they are older someone else may clean them up but this is not true in the family of God. In the general sense each child must clean himself up, or each child of his own will and through the attitude of his own heart must do that which brings him the cleansing power of the blood that was shed for the sins of the world. There is no one else who can do it for him.

Another thing that is very important in keeping clean or unspotted from the world is being able to know when one is spotted and needs to clean up. This one can know only through the word of God. If he is without a knowledge of the word of God as it applies to him personally, he is blind, and, like one who is blind physically, he may literally become filthy without being aware of it. He cannot depend upon his human intuition to reveal his spiritual state of cleanliness, neither can he learn by looking at the people around him. If he knows only a little about God's teaching he will be able to see only the big spots. He must not only be able to look "into the perfect law, the law of liberty" but he must also do it frequently if he is to keep himself clean.

Since the younger children in the family of God need to clean up frequently and even the most mature need to clean up occasionally if they are going to keep themselves unspotted from the world, it is most important that all who have entered into this relationship with God

be well acquainted with the process or procedure to be followed in cleaning up in order that they may keep themselves unspotted from the world. Because of this universal need let us earnestly and prayerfully search the scriptures to learn what the Christian who has become spotted is to do to cleanse himself or to purify himself by securing the forgiveness of his sins.

Let us begin our quest for the answer of this question with a consideration of the statement from John which has already been studied in part. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). From this statement two things are evident, as has already been observed. The first is that our forgiveness and cleansing is from God. The second, that it is conditioned upon our own activities, "if we confess our sins." This expression as has already been mentioned is evidently not referring to the specific act of confession alone but rather indicating our attitude of humble recognition of our sinfulness before God in contradistinction to our denial of being sinners. Such an attitude is suggested in Jesus' parable about the two men who went up into the temple to pray. We are told, "But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Jesus declared, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Luke 18:14). Certainly the act of confession is included but all else is not excluded. Let us further observe that John does not indicate to whom the confession

of our sins is to be made. Since God is the one who is to forgive and cleanse, it is natural to conclude that we are to confess our sins to him. And certainly in the humble recognition of our sinfulness before the God whom we love and whose forgiveness and cleansing we seek we would be moved to make full confession. However, it may include further confessions also; we shall see later. But since all sin is a violation of God's teaching or God's law it must all be confessed to God. A sin against man is a sin against God for it is a violation of God's teaching. A sin against a brother is a sin against Christ. "And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ" (I Cor. 8:12). And a sin against Christ is a sin against God. A sin against one's own body is a sin against God for "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God and ye are not your own" (I Cor. 6:19). And in his teaching on fornication, Paul said, "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid" (I Cor: 6:15).

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 10

1. Summarize the reasons that have already been given that a Christian should keep himself pure.
2. What motive does John present for maintaining Christian purity?
3. On what basis did Paul appeal for holy living?
4. What reason did Peter give for being holy?

5. What do the appeals of John, Paul, and Peter show in regard to the Christian relationship?
6. Give quotations from Peter and James that show the earnestness and thoroughness with which purity must be sought.
7. Show from John's epistle that God does not expect of his people sinless perfection.
8. Who cleanses and forgives man and upon what does it depend?
9. What three things are clear from this discussion and what is the inevitable conclusion?
10. Outline the procedure by which a mother can keep her child clean and show how this is paralleled in the Christian.
11. Give a definite point of contrast between the child's cleansing and the Christian's cleansing.
12. In view of what has been said, if a Christian is to keep himself clean, what procedure must he be well acquainted with?
13. What is the meaning of the word "confess" as John is using it?
14. To whom must all sin be confessed and why?

LESSON 11

KEEP THYSELF PURE (Continued)

Now let us consider this teaching as it was applied by an inspired man of God in an actual case where a child of God had sinned. The case is that of Simon of Samaria or commonly known as Simon the sorcerer. While Philip was preaching the Gospel in Samaria we are told "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed" (Acts 8:13). When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the gospel they sent Peter and John that they might bestow upon these people the Holy Spirit. When this was being done, we are told: "Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts

8:18-23). In these verses we have the description of Simon's sin and Peter's instruction to him what to do about it. Let us observe first that this was evidently a sin against God. It was an act which reflected upon the workings of God as they related to the salvation of man. And Peter described his condition with these words "for thy heart is not right before God." What did Peter tell him to do? "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Since Peter is instructing Simon on what to do that God may forgive and cleanse, he must be making application of the teaching briefly stated by John. We note that he does not use the word confess but tells Simon to repent and pray the Lord for forgiveness, which of necessity includes the act of confession. How could he petition God relative to the sin that he committed without confessing it?

Now let us summarize the case of Simon the sorcerer. He had been baptized into Christ as a believer, becoming a child of God. Of this relationship Peter raises no question, neither does he in any way imply that there was anything deficient or lacking. Simon sinned against God alone in offering to purchase the power to convey the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Peter made it clear that Simon's sin had disqualified him for work in the kingdom of God (this has happened to many) and instructed him to repent and pray which would evidently include a confession. He did not advise Simon to look for someone to pray for him. Neither did he make reply when Simon requested that he pray for him. Nor did

he instruct Simon to confess his sin to the church. From this it is evident that the man who has sinned must plead his own case before God. Since every sin that man commits is a sin against God, it naturally follows that this is a necessary practice if one would receive forgiveness of sins and cleanse himself from the spots of the world.

If, however, a Christian's sin is against his brother as well as against God, there is something else that he must do to be forgiven. He must not only confess his sin to his brother, but he must make the matter right with him. This may sound a bit startling and may call forth the question, "Do you mean that one must get man's forgiveness before God will forgive him?" I certainly do; or at least he must make every reasonable effort to do so. If a Christian knows he has wronged his brother, he must make it right with his brother before he can make it right with God. And that is not all; he must make the matter right with his brother before he is in condition to worship God. Jesus showed this by this instruction "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). This statement is made in terms of an act of worship under the law of Moses. If it should have been done then, how much more now under the law of Christ? And if it was necessary to make one's worship acceptable then, it is undoubtedly necessary to make one's worship acceptable now. Since this is true of worship surely it is necessary in order to obtain forgive-

ness for the wrong. But why is it necessary? Has Jesus given a direct commandment to do it? No, but the Spirit of God by which the sons of God are led demand it (Rom. 8:14) and "Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ (or God) is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). This is another way of saying that the very nature of a Christian demands it. A true Christian loves the one he wronged, whether he is a brother, a friend, or an enemy; and when he becomes aware that he has sinned against him, he wants to adjust the matter. But if one truly repents and asks God to forgive without adjusting the matter with man, will he not be forgiven? Can this be done? Can a person be penitent and not penitent at the same time? Can he repent of the wrong with respect to God and not repent of it as it concerns the man against whom it was committed? And why would one who is a child of God expect his heavenly father to forgive him his wrong against another child of God when nothing has been done to right the wrong? In an earthly family, would we expect the father who loved all of his children to forgive one child who had wronged another child whom he loved when he had not made the matter right with his brother? Neither should we expect God to forgive. And since God loves all men and has taught his children to do the same, the principle applies universally. This means simply that if the sin against God is also a sin against a brother (or man) one must repent, be reconciled to his brother, then pray God to forgive him.

Is there anything else necessary to man's obtaining forgiveness of sin and a cleansing from the spots of the

world? Yes, there is a basic condition and one that must be met in order for man to secure forgiveness of his sins. This is set forth plainly and unmistakably by the Savior himself. After showing the disciples the manner after which they should pray, he declared "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). On another occasion Jesus said, "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). These statements certainly leave no doubt that a man must have the Spirit of Christ sufficiently to forgive his brother, or else there is no need for his praying to God to forgive him. And if he has the Spirit of Christ he will surely want to adjust his wrongs against his brother, and to take advantage of every other opportunity to remove every influence of his misbehavior that might be a hindrance to anyone or a hindrance to the cause which he loves.

What other instruction do we have in regard to what to do to secure the forgiveness of sin? Insofar as the person is concerned who commits the sin there is no other instruction. To some people this may not sound like the correct answer, and others may wonder why no more instruction has been given. However, if we will consider the very nature of the case, we will readily conclude that no further instruction was necessary. In fact, the instruction that is given follows the natural

demand of the situation. We should remember that the one who is seeking forgiveness is a child of God, one who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ, one who loves his Lord, and who would fulfill his mission of helping to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, one who loves his brother and is seeking his brother's good as well as his own purification. Surely, one who loves God would seek God's forgiveness in the matter, and one who loves his brother would seek his brother's forgiveness in the matter and also would seek to follow a course open to him in any other way to remove the ill effect of his sin and to help all to honor and glorify God.

Since the statement has been made that all of the teaching that pertains to an individual securing the forgiveness of his sin as a Christian has been covered, someone is sure to raise the question, what about the teaching by James on the matter? Did not James say, "Confess, therefore, your sins one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed?" (Jas. 5:16). He certainly did. But the context shows clearly that the healing referred to is the healing of the body and not the forgiveness of the sins. In this statement James is speaking of the sick who have called the elders. Those elders evidently had the power of healing, and the sickness was probably the result of sin. It is evident that the elders' petitions are in particular that this man may be healed and not for the forgiveness of his sins. As we are told "The Lord shall raise him up and if he have committed sins it shall be forgiven him" (Jas. 5:15). Since oil was one of the best and the most frequently used curative

elements of that day, one might ask if this was a miraculous performance, why were the elders to anoint with oil? The fact that oil was a medicinal element did not disqualify it from being used in connection with miraculous healing. In fact, it appears that it was commonly used in that connection. It is true that when Jesus sent forth the twelve and instructed them to cast out demons and to heal the sick (Matt. 8:10), he did not instruct them according to the record at that place to use oil in the healing of the sick. But in Mark's record of the carrying out of that commission we find it said "And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them" (Mark 6:13). It is also evident in James' statement, if we will read closely, that the elder was not depending upon the virtue of the oil with which he anointed to heal the sick, for it was to be done "In the name of the Lord." It is evident that the matter under consideration here is the healing of the sick. Note that James did not say, "Confess therefore your sins one to another and pray one for another that your sins may be forgiven," but "that ye may be healed." Why should we take the instruction that was given relative to healing the sick and turn it into a ritual to add further form to the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ?

It has been said that some sins must be confessed to God and that others must also be confessed to the person who has been sinned against. Are there not some conditions under which one must confess his sins to still others? Is it not necessary that the sinner confess his sins to a priest and have the priest pray to God for his

forgiveness as some people practice in religion today? Of this practice there is not one word of instruction in the New Testament. There is not the slightest implication that this practice should be followed. In fact, there is no mention of any such priest in the Christian religion. We should not overlook the fact that under the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the high priest and every Christian is a priest. Besides this, there is no mention whatsoever of a priest or any other part of a specialized priesthood. Then why should one find it necessary to go to a priest that is without divine authorization for confession and special prayer when God has said not one word about such a practice. Surely no person who believes the Bible to be the word of God and who has accepted it as his guide by which to live a life pleasing in the sight of God, will find it necessary to resort to any such invention or will be inclined to follow any such man-made ritual.

There are some people who may be disposed to say: "I agree fully with the idea that there is no scriptural basis for a special priesthood under the Christian dispensation, and certainly no human being that has been empowered or authorized to set the penance that should be performed by the person who has sinned, and certainly no demand that one who has sinned make confession to such a priest. And I also agree that all that is necessary when one has sinned privately is to repent and to confess his sins to God and ask forgiveness, or to the one against whom he has sinned and to God; but what about a man's public sins? Is he not required to confess them to the church and ask that the church pray for his forgiveness?"

In reply to this question it may be said with the same emphasis as in the former case, that there is no Bible teaching to the effect that such is a necessary practice. We have already seen that the statement generally used to support such a practice, "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed," (Jas. 5:16) was made with reference to the healing of the physical body in the days of miraculous healing. This being true, the doctrine of church confession and prayer is only attributing to the church some of the power that has been assumed by the priest. Why should a child in the family of God, one who is beloved of his Father, one who has been taught that if he will confess his sins that God is righteous to forgive his sins and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness, need to depend upon the pleas of other members of the divine family in order that this promise might be fulfilled unto him? Will God fail to forgive a child who repents and prays for forgiveness because there are no others to pray for him? If the prayers of others are necessary for forgiveness of some sins, why not for all? And what is the line of distinction between private and public sins? Some people have attempted to answer this question by declaring that the confession of a sin should be coextensive with the knowledge of the sin. This implies that the word "private" is used to refer to sins that are unknown to others; and "public" is used to speak of sins that have become known to other people. However, this statement still leaves the line undrawn. How many people must know of one's sin before it can be classed as a public

sin? And in reality how well does the confession of a sin, or a sinful condition, to a small congregation in one community coincide with the public knowledge of an individual's sin, and especially when the confession is made to a congregation in one community, while the sinful life has been lived largely in a community that is removed by several miles from the place where the confession is made? And furthermore, do men need a special intercessor, or intercessors, among men either living or dead when they have the Lord Jesus Christ who is high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, whose special concern is the forgiveness of men's sins, and of whom it is said "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Are not both of these practices (prayers by the priest and prayers by the church) reflections upon the Lord Jesus Christ as well as upon God's promise to those who in faith repent of their sins and pray God to forgive them?

There is another grave danger in the practice of restoration, or pardon, through the method of church confession and prayer. If the person who is making the confession is ignorant of God's law of pardon, and has committed wrongs against other people especially his brethren, and without any effort of setting things right with them, accepts this church ritual as being effective in securing the pardon of all his sins, he is being misled. He is led or allowed to believe that through this confession and prayer, God has forgiven all of his sins when there is no

scriptural evidence for any such assurance. We should be just as careful with God's teaching, which is sometimes referred to as "the second law of pardon" as we are with his teaching for "the first law of pardon," or for the first forgiveness when man is cleansed and brought into the family of God.

May we also observe that those who use James 5:16 to support the doctrine of church restoration by public confession for the major part fail to follow the instruction given by James. He says "Confess your sins," or faults, while most people making such confessions only confess that they have sinned; they do not confess their sins. There is little reason to doubt that those to whom James wrote confessed their sins.

In our speaking of the matter of our confession to the priest and confession to the church, it has been from the standpoint of such being required as a necessary part of man's pardon of his sins. From this point of view, the answer in both cases is "No." However, this does not necessarily preclude the practice on the part of anyone who is in sin and who feels his weakness, of confessing his sins to any other brother or any number of brethren and their praying together for his and their mutual strength and forgiveness. However, it should be clearly understood that God has delegated no special power in the matter either to that one who has been called "priest" or to the church.

Reader, if you have entered into that sacred Christian relationship and are sincere in your efforts to be faithful to it, if you are serious in your hopes of enjoying the

promises which God has given to those who are faithful, it is hoped that you will be keenly aware of the fact that this lesson is to you as to me. God's teaching to us is that we must keep ourselves pure, that we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Since we cannot do this by living perfectly, then it is imperative that we keep unspotted by continuously and repeatedly cleansing ourselves from the spots as they are accumulated.

If the Bible teaching on this subject has been properly handled, it is clear that when man sins against God he must repent and pray to God for forgiveness, confessing that sin. If he has sinned against his fellowman, then he must go to him and make adjustment for the sin or the wrong that he has done and confess and pray to God for his forgiveness. And certainly if he loves God and loves his fellowman and truly repents, he should make every effort to remove any hindrance that might be caused by his wrong or by his sin. And surely he will want all who know of his wrong-doing to know that he has changed, to know that it was wrong, and to avoid following in his footsteps. Although there is no scriptural demand for his making a public confession to the congregation, this may be considered a good way to counterbalance the evil influence of his example, especially if many of those in the congregation are acquainted with his wrong doing. Also, if he is weak and feels the need of the prayers of the congregation for his encouragement and strengthening through their fellowship in joining him in petition to the Father on his behalf as an act of Christian fellowship and not the exercise of any

particularly delegated authority, it surely would be well and would be in order.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 11

1. What do we learn about being cleansed from sin from the case of Simon the sorcerer?
2. How does Jesus show the importance of adjusting a wrong against a brother?
3. Reason from his teaching to show that such must be done if one is going to secure forgiveness.
4. Show this also from the family relationship.
5. What should one do who has sinned against God only in order to be cleansed?
6. What should a Christian do who has sinned against his brother in order to be cleansed? Give evidence.
7. What basic condition must one meet in order to receive forgiveness of sin?
8. Show that the instruction on how to be cleansed follows the natural demand of the situation.
9. Show that James' teaching to Christians of the twelve tribes of the dispersion to "confess therefore your sins one to another" was for physical healing and not merely for cleansing.
10. Show that confession to a priest is unnecessary and unauthorized.
11. Show that confession to a church or congregation is not a Bible requirement for the forgiveness of sin.
12. Show the weakness in supporting the idea of public confession by the reasoning that the confession of sins should be co-extensive with the knowledge of the sin.
13. Upon whom does the use of special intercessors reflect?
14. What is another grave danger in the practice of restoration or pardon through the method of church confession and prayer?
15. What practice does this teaching not preclude?

LESSON 12

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

The title of this lesson expresses a responsibility that belongs to the family relationship; however, it is one that is frequently neglected, occasionally ignored, and sometimes completely repudiated. Being in the relationship seems to offer little assurance that the obligation will be fully accepted. Apparently, it was neglected, it was ignored, and it was repudiated in the very first family. We are told that Cain slew his brother, and when Jehovah made inquiry about him, tried to justify his noncommittal answer by asking, "Am I my brother's keeper" (Gen. 4:9). From the record of this case, although it was much more radical than the average case, the cause for the failure to meet this personal responsibility is evident; it was the concern for self. Cain was suffering from a wounded pride, which is a very definite evidence of selfishness. Abel's success was not the cause of Cain's failure before God, neither did it necessarily cause more to be expected of Cain; but Cain's love for himself was so much greater than his love for Abel that Abel's success was a source of irritation, rather than a source of joy. Whether the failure to fulfill one's obligation as a brother is a matter of personal antagonism or the more common lack of interest or indifference to needs, it always arises from selfishness.

The more one loves himself, the less he loves others. It is true, however, that dire need as the result of an emergency which entails physical suffering commonly arouses one to fulfill his fraternal obligation, but lesser needs or those that are not physical in character often go unnoticed.

In view of these failures to meet the obligations of fraternal relationships in human families, it is not surprising that people in the divine family often fail to give what they can and what they should give to other members of the family. The likelihood of failure or neglect in the divine family is further increased by the nature of the needs. The most vital needs are spiritual and can be supplied only through the most personal type of service. The thing that must be shared is one's own life, and this is only done when people truly love those with whom they share. The failure is more noticeable in God's family because the need is more extended. Much personal helpfulness must be supplied by brethren in God's family that is provided by parents in human families. Consequently, when brethren fail to meet their obligations to know and to supply the needs of fellow Christians, the results may be fearfully disastrous. In fact, that is just what they are at present. The rate of spiritual infant and pre-adolescent mortality today rivals the physical infant and childhood mortality of two centuries ago. It even surpasses it. The greatest need in the religious world today is Christian living—living that not only shows Christ to the world, but that also shows Christ to a vast multitude of spiritual weaklings, who are

sadly in need of a brother's care. Yes, we are our brother's keepers, and we need the mutual helpfulness of that relationship to keep us spiritually strong. To fail in this obligation may result in the loss of the souls of others, and it is sure to result in the loss of the souls of those who fail, for such a failure is an unmistakable indication that one does not have the Spirit of Christ and "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his."

From this it is easily seen that it is imperative that every Christian be his brother's keeper, not only for the brother's safety but for the salvation of his own soul. This should awaken in everyone who is serious about his relationship to God a very lively concern about his relationship to man, especially his fellow Christian, and a whole-hearted interest in the teaching that makes known the obligations of the relationship. So let us pursue this study in the full realization that it is important to each one of us personally. It is vital that we learn of our obligations to each other and to all and how to meet them.

As has already been implied being my brother's keeper in the family of God means having a vital interest in his welfare and doing those things that will insure his spiritual safety and aid his spiritual progress. Since one's continuing safety is largely dependent upon his strength and ability to care for himself, and one's success or accomplishment is dependent upon his own personal development; and since in the divine family there are always children who are younger and weaker, the broadest, the most basic obligation of every Christian, and especially of those who are more mature, is to seek to aid others in

their spiritual growth, to help them to become strong and vigorous. Paul encouraged the Christians at Thessalonica to do that which would strengthen themselves because of what God had done for them and then for the same reason encouraged them to be helpful to each other: "But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do" (I Thess. 5:8-11). He wrote the Roman Christians after a similar fashion: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Rom. 14:16-19). "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" (Rom. 15:1-2). To the Christians at Corinth Paul declared: "Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (I Cor. 14:5). He also exhorted: "So also ye, since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound

unto the edifying of the church" (I Cor. 14:12) and "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26), and pointed out the fact that "All things beloved are for your edifying" (II Cor. 12:19). There are many other reminders of this obligation in the New Testament teaching, some of which will be considered as we study some of the means through which this obligation can be accomplished or fulfilled; but surely everyone who has been truly redeemed, purified, and reconciled to God, everyone who has the love of God in his heart will easily and naturally accept the Bible teaching, that he should seek to strengthen his brethren.

Although this is a teaching that should be easily acceptable to those who think of it seriously, unfortunately it has not been thought of seriously by many people who call themselves Christians. Somehow, it has not found a very important place in the twentieth century Bible teaching. Probably this is partly due to the fact that Christians are not confronted with the violent threats of the first century which made them conscious of the need for strength and encouragement that could be supplied through mutual helpfulness. Even though the visible spiritual mortality of our day approaches the fifty per cent mark, it has taken place so gradually and has been continuing over such a long period of time that it has aroused comparatively little concern on the part of Christians generally. I fear that we have been much more concerned over the poor sinner who has not accepted the gospel, than we have over the spiritual safety of those who have accepted it. We have given more emphasis to

the Bible teaching that the hope of eternal life is to those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ, than we have to the teaching that people must be faithful to him as Lord, that he must rule in their lives if their acceptance of him is to bring them into the realization of his promises. We seem to be more interested in ways and means to get people to confess Christ proportionately than we are in successful guidance in Christian living; more interested in having them born into the family than in making sure that they live and grow to maturity. It almost appears that we love the children of the devil more than we love the children of God. This is not the Bible emphasis. We have no record of Jesus ever having prayed "that God would lengthen out the brittle thread of life, that those who had rejected him repeatedly might still have time and opportunity to confess the name of their blessed Lord and be saved." We do have record of his praying for those who believe on him; and it is my fear that if we fail to return to the Bible emphasis and meet our obligation to edify and build up those who have accepted Christ, that spiritual conditions are going from bad to worse. May I say again that the greatest need of the world today is for those who call themselves Christians to make an honest effort to live as Christians ought to live.

But let us turn our attention now to the nature of the problem and to consider some of the ways and means by which we may build up or edify each other. Paul gave us the key to the whole situation when he declared "Knowledge puffeth up but love edifieth" (I Cor. 8:1).

In this statement Paul was evidently contrasting the effect of knowledge and love upon the nature of man, each taken separately. Knowledge alone makes one think he is big, but love makes him big, both before God and man. The man who is puffed up loves himself; the one who loves God and man is humble. The man who is puffed up will follow his own way as Cain did, but the man who loves God will give up his own way and do the things that please God. From this we may rightfully conclude that knowledge without love is dangerous, so mere knowledge of the Bible alone will not make people strong and effective spiritually, but love will. Therefore, the ultimate goal is to lead one to love God and to love man. The more he loves, the greater will be his spiritual security and the greater will be his effectiveness as a Christian.

In the letter to the Hebrew Christians the purpose of which was to strengthen them and prevent their falling away from the truth, the writer urged, "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. 10:24-25). Unfortunately, many people have virtually overlooked the first part of this quotation and have used the latter part after a sort of legalistic fashion to compel church attendance. This is a grave distortion of the passage. The first part sets forth the very heart of the teaching, the goal to be accomplished, "to provoke unto love and good works"; the latter part gives instruction on how to

reach the goal and is more easily understood and can be more effectively followed if the goal or purpose is kept in mind. In fact, the separation of the instruction from the statement of the goal, together with a strong leaning toward legalism in Christianity, has led to a gross misapplication of the instruction. The instruction has been taken to mean "Do not stop attending church" or "Do not fail to be at church," exhorting one another to be there and do it the more as the time of meeting draws nigh or as the day of death and the judgment is coming. Or, in brief, the teaching is made to amount to about this, "Be at church and insist that everybody else be there," with no consideration whatsoever given to the purpose. If, however, we keep the goal in mind, "to provoke unto love and good works," it is evident that "exhorting one another" is a way of provoking unto love and good works and is stated in contrast to forsaking the assembly. "The day drawing nigh" can refer to none other than the day of the destruction of Jerusalem which was to bring great persecution. To state the matter another way, these Christians are being told that instead of forsaking the assembly, they should make of it an occasion for exhorting one another unto love and good works. From this we see that their assembling together was not merely for the purpose of complying with a commandment but rather for the purpose of helping each other to grow stronger in love and good works.

Emphasis is also given to this as the purpose for Christians assembling, in Paul's instructions to the Corinthians. After showing that the gift of prophesying was greater

than the gift of speaking with tongues, because through it the church was edified (I Cor. 14:4-5, I Cor. 14:13-17), Paul wrote: "What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern. But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted" (I Cor. 14:26-31). We see the same purpose for coming together implied in Paul's instruction relative to the song service, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts 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). Let us not forget that the coming together of Christians is for mutual edification. May what is said and done when we come together always contribute to that end. May we become conscious of the need of such edification and have greater zeal for the assemblies of the saints. May we have greater earnestness in our worship that it may become more meaningful to us as well as more helpful to others. May every assembly of Christian people be

such that everyone will be strengthened, being provoked to love God and to love man more, and will leave with that happy satisfaction that it was good to have been there.

If the basic obligation of the Christian family relationship presented above, the obligation to edify and to build each other up, has been shown to be sound Bible teaching, this next obligation is easily recognized as one that would naturally follow. Surely, since it is the obligation of a Christian to do that which will build up and strengthen his brethren, consistency would demand that he avoid any action or failure on his part that would cause a brother to stumble or would in any way interfere with his spiritual development. Since Paul found occasion in his day to impress this teaching upon Christians, there is reason to believe that it is also needed today. May we take the lesson directly from him.

It seems that some of the Christians at Corinth, as is true of many today, had become so strongly impressed with the fact that they should do only that which was right within itself, that they were making this the only standard by which to measure their Christian practices. Those who had learned the gospel teaching knew that there was one God, that idols were not gods, and that it was not wrong for them to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols. They applied the test of lawfulness, but apparently had failed to learn the principle of expediency so Paul reminded them of the matter in these words, "All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify"

(I Cor. 10:23). From this statement it is evident that in some fields Christian behavior must meet the test of expediency as well as the test of lawfulness.

To impress the matter Paul called to their attention the actual situation, "Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled" (I Cor. 8:7). Then he warned them of the danger: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak. For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ" (I Cor. 8:9-12). After thus showing the gravity of causing one to stumble, Paul reinforced his lesson by stating the care that he would use to avoid such offence, "Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble" (I Cor. 8:13).

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 12

1. Show how this responsibility was ignored or repudiated in the very first family?
2. What was the cause of the failure to meet this responsibility?
3. Out of what does the failure to meet such responsibility arise today?

4. Why is this failure more likely to occur in the divine family?
5. What makes this obligation to the brethren more imperative in the divine family than in the human family?
6. What is the evidence that Christians are failing in this responsibility today?
7. What loss will result from such a failure? Why?
8. In this relationship, what is the most basic obligation?
9. Give Paul's exhortations to this end.
10. What kind of people will naturally accept such Bible teaching?
11. What may be responsible for the failure to give this teaching an important place in Bible teaching of the twentieth century?
12. What misplaced emphasis is evident in present day Bible teaching?
13. What is the greatest need of the world today?
14. Contrast the effects of knowledge and love in one's life.
15. What distortion has been made with reference to Hebrews 10:24,25?
16. Give other evidences of this great purpose of assembling.
17. If one accepts the obligation of being his brother's keeper, what other obligation will be easily recognized and followed?
18. How and why did the Christians at Corinth fail in following this teaching?
19. How did Paul emphasize the gravity of such in this statement?

LESSON 13

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER (Continued)

It is true that it is very unlikely that any reasonable parallel to this case or situation may occur in this country under the existing conditions, but the principle of expediency has a broader application. After pointing out to the Corinthians some of the conditions under which it was right for them to eat meat sacrificed to idols and other conditions under which it should not be eaten, Paul showed this by his final exhortation: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many" (I Cor. 10:31-33). Here Paul extended the application of this teaching even to include the Jews and the Greeks who had not yet become Christians.

In Paul's letter to the Christians at Rome, he warned against another practice through which a brother might be caused to stumble. It appears that he was dealing with a situation that existed between the Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome. There was a conflict between their ideas and also practices in regard to eating of meats and observing of days, with attention given mainly to the former. It appears that some of the Jewish Christians,

who had been taught under the law of Moses that certain meats were unclean and others under certain conditions were unclean, were so concerned about maintaining their purity before God that they ate only herbs while the Gentile Christians who had not had such teaching ate all kinds of meats. Paul showed that these differences should not prevent these Jews from being received and should not give rise to such attitudes as to prevent the Jewish and Gentile Christians working together in harmony. The real heart of the problem is set forth in these verses, "Who art thou that judgeth the servant of another, to his own lord he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4), "But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Rom. 14:10), and "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling" (Rom. 14:13). We see from these statements that Paul was warning the Christians at Rome against becoming stumbling blocks by condemning those who failed to agree with them in such matters. He agreed with the Gentiles that meat as such was not unclean, but also reminded them that it was unclean to anyone who accounted it so, "I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Rom. 14:14). Next Paul reminded these Christians of the seriousness of what could happen, "For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no

longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). Then Paul followed this with an urgent exhortation including the reason why: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God" (Rom. 14:16-20).

In this part of his discussion of this case, Paul has reminded the Christians of a very vital principle. A person who is honest and sincere in the matter of religion must follow his convictions. His own nature demands it; therefore, before such a one can change his practices, his convictions must be changed, and just telling one that he is wrong does not change his convictions. Even a presentation of what is right in a manner that appears convincing to the person who already believes it to be right is frequently not sufficient to change one's conviction. The part of his background thinking, the facts that have been established with him and that have led to the conclusion or conviction, must be changed. A recognition of this need should sustain the patience of those who love and who are seeking the real good of others.

There are two cautions that appear to be in order at this point, for there are two misapplications, or two conditions either of which might lead to misapplication of this teaching. In the first place, Paul was speaking of

receiving and dealing with him who was weak in faith. It is apparent from the context that Paul was not speaking of one who had a weak faith or conviction that Jesus was the Christ, but of one whose faith had not yet sufficiently established in his own thinking that understanding of the gospel which was necessary to change his conviction relative to these things. He was speaking of one who had a real zeal for Christianity but who was misguided by his earlier religious convictions and habits. He was not speaking of one who had called himself a Christian for ten years who had never had enough interest in Christianity to study the Bible, whose lack of efforts to honor God and to serve man was such as to utterly fail to show love for either. Neither was he speaking of that one who has called himself a Christian for fifteen or twenty years, has studied the Bible after a fashion, has expended some efforts in the kingdom of God, and is seeking a way to force the acceptance of his religious ideas. In the second place, the practices involved were not such as conflicted with the cardinal teachings of the gospel. It was not a case of rejecting baptism, the Lord's Supper, or the teaching to do good to others; neither did it demand that circumcision be made a part of the gospel, which would have shown a distrust in Christ. These things should not be overlooked.

Although Paul's major emphasis in his discussion seems to have been on the matter of causing people to stumble through the practice of judging one another, before leaving the matter he reminded them of the broad application of the principle, "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to

drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth” (Rom. 14:21). The practice of this teaching is the real test of Christian love. How much are we willing to give up for others and how much have we considered Jesus’ warning “But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

However, with all of our efforts to encourage, support, and edify each other, and our care in avoiding causing people to stumble, through the weakness of our humanity we all stumble and become spotted by the things of the world. Therefore, we are not only our brother’s keepers in the efforts to build him up that he may be able to stand and to glorify God but also in our efforts to lift him up when he falls and to encourage him to clean up when he becomes spotted. These admonitions must not be overlooked. “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one on a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2). “And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all” (I Thess. 5:14-15). “Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which

is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed" (Heb. 12:12-13). "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).

The responsibility for this service is both individual and collective. If a brother sins against you and fails to adjust the matter and clean himself up, it becomes your obligation to go to him and make him more conscious of the spot that makes him displeasing in the sight of God that he will be encouraged to clean up. This should be done because you love him and in keeping with Paul's instruction "Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." If you truly love him this instruction will not be difficult to follow, and be it remembered that even though he refuses to hear you this spirit of gentleness or meekness must characterize all of your dealings with him relative to this matter.

On the same occasion that Jesus warned his disciples of the seriousness of causing one of those little ones that believed on him to stumble he gave this instruction: "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matt. 18:15-17). Although

this was spoken before people actually began to be gathered into the church that Christ said he would build, the assembly of his disciples as it is spoken of in the New Testament, before we have any record of disciples being baptized into Christ, since the whole discussion was started by the question, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:1), it is evident that it was to have its application among those who entered into the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed to be "at hand."

In letters which Paul wrote to three different churches he found occasion to remind the brethren of their responsibility to make a combined effort to rescue a brother from his sinful practices. In all three cases the sins being dealt with were quite different in character. To the Christians at Rome Paul wrote: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:17-18). To the Christians at Corinth he wrote: "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife . . . in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus . . . but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a forni-

cator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (I Cor. 5:1, 4-5, 11). To the Christians at Thessalonica he wrote: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. . . . For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. . . . And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thess. 3:6, 11, 14-15).

From these three cases at least three things are evident. First, if a disciple persisted in practicing that which was displeasing in the sight of God, he was to be withdrawn from. Second, the purpose of this was not to cast him off but to bring him to repentance and save him. Third, it was not a formal or an official act by the elders but a cooperative effort by the brethren. This certainly makes it clear that there is a congregational obligation as well as an individual obligation that we be our brother's keepers. The question is sometimes asked, "Do you believe in withdrawing from a brother who has sinned?" I certainly do. It is difficult to understand how anyone could believe the New Testament teaching and not believe this practice should be followed. Apparently this question has arisen from the failure of Christian people to practice this teaching and not from an inability to understand it. The teaching is plain; it is basic; it is im-

portant. Why has it been lost sight of or discarded? Can it be that the conditions among us have become such that those who are spiritual are not sufficient in number that their combined Christian influence may be made effective in recovering a brother from his sinful practices? Have those who think they are spiritual become so selfishly interested in their own affairs, so destitute of the Spirit of Christ, and so devoid of brotherly love that they can see a brother becoming spotted by the things of the world, becoming defiled and ugly in the sight of God, becoming a hindrance to the influence of Christianity, and a destroyer of his own soul, and not be moved with compassion for him? Can we believe that a Christian can so forget God and become so neglectful of his teaching that he can habitually practice that which is wrong or continually neglect the doing of that which is right and that which people will naturally do who love God and have any reason to believe that they are heirs to life eternal? Can we believe that one who is so indifferent to his brother's needs has the Spirit of Christ? And are we fully aware of the fact that "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9)? Are not these things enough to impress upon us clearly, fully, and unequivocally the fact that it is imperative that we be our brother's keeper if we are to enjoy the eternal blessings of God? Just as surely as it was necessary that we be baptized for the remission of our sins, Christ must live in us if we are to inherit eternal life. Just as surely as we must be baptized into Christ, Christ must dwell in us.

Surely enough has been said to impress everyone of us who will consider the matter thoughtfully that we have very important obligations to each other, obligations that must be fulfilled, that indeed each one of us ought to be able to say of himself "I am my brother's keeper." And may this mean that individually and collectively we are making an honest effort to encourage and edify each other, to avoid causing any one to stumble, and to seek diligently to restore everyone who is overtaken in a trespass in the spirit of gentleness. May we be guided by the teaching and the Spirit of Christ.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 13

1. After dealing with this particular local problem at Corinth, what broader application did Paul make of the principle?
2. What is the application that Paul makes of this principle in the Roman letter and how does he show the seriousness of doing such?
3. In this teaching to the people at Rome, what very vital principle does Paul suggest and what effect should this have on the method employed to correct error?
4. What two cautions are pointed out relative to the application of this teaching about causing people to stumble?
5. What practice is suggested as the real test of Christian love?
6. Give evidence of a third obligation in being our brother's keeper.
7. What should characterize all efforts to restore?
8. What instruction did Jesus give on this matter?
9. What shows it to be applicable to the Christian relationship?
10. Paul taught withdrawal from a brother because of what sins?
11. What three things are evident from the three cases given by Paul?
12. What is suggested by the questions asked at this point?

LESSON 14

BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED WITH UNBELIEVERS

In the preceding lessons we have been concerned principally with the positive obligations of Christians that result directly from their relationship with God, their relationship with each other, or their relationship with non-Christians. But in this lesson and the next one we are to consider a negative obligation—the obligation to avoid relationships of a particular type, relationships that impose obligations that will interfere with one's meeting his rightful Christian obligations and thereby endanger his relationship with God and his eternal inheritance. The danger of entering into such relationships will not be recognized by those who think of Christianity only as a mere religion and not as a way of living; those who hold it as a form of godliness, having denied the power thereof (II Tim. 3:4), those who have nominally confessed Jesus to be the Christ but have not accepted him as their Lord or ruler. In fact, reader, unless or until your relationship to God becomes vital to you and the obligations of the relationship are accepted personally by you, you will find this instruction from the Apostle Paul not only difficult to accept but difficult to understand. Until you have accepted your relationship to God,

your fundamental Christian relationship as a reality and have given it its proper place among the relationships of life, the most important place, you are incapable of comprehending the importance of your Christian obligations in comparison with the other obligations of life. If this is the case with you, you will be inclined to pass this lesson lightly or even to deem it too extreme in its requirements to be considered seriously. If, however, you have thoughtfully evaluated the Bible teaching that has been presented, if you have come to believe that it is your mission as a Christian to be a light in the world holding forth the word of life (Phil. 2:15, 16) to show forth the excellencies of Christ (I Pet. 2:9) and to adorn the doctrine of Christ in all things (Titus 2:10); if you have the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5, 6) and are led by the Spirit of God as are the other children of God (Rom. 8:14), having been made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2); if you are a true member of that glorious church (Eph. 5:27), having been redeemed and purified by the blood of Christ for his own possession (Titus 2:14), and are seeking earnestly to keep yourself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27), you will not only find this lesson in complete harmony with the rest of the Bible teaching but also you will find it a natural part of God's teaching to his children whom he loves and whom he would shield from unnecessary dangers to their own souls and fearful handicaps to the accomplishment of their mission to be the light of the world. And further if you are aware of the spiritual weakness of so many of those

who are born into the divine family, and the powerful blinding influence of the immediate enjoyment of the privileges provided by earthly relationships that leads the babe in Christ to value the relationships so highly that he is impelled to comply with their obligations even though they conflict with the obligations of his Christian relationship, you will recognize the grave need for this lesson. May God bless you in seeing Christianity as it really is and in receiving this lesson as a part of its teaching.

Paul states the lesson simply, directly, and unequivocally. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." Then he shows that such is demanded by the very nature of the situation. Certainly it would be unwise and inappropriate for people who have nothing in common to be yoked together and especially if their interests and nature conflict. Paul reveals this conflict between Christians and unbelievers by asking the following questions: "For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity or what communion have light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?" (II Cor. 14-16). The fact that Paul asked these questions without making any reference whatsoever to the answers shows that he knew that the answers were evident. He had no doubt that the contrast was clear. If the Corinthians are to be influenced by it, however, it must be made personal. This Paul did by establishing the fact that Christians constitute the temple of the living God. He declared, "For we are a temple

of the living God, even as God said I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (II Cor. 6:16). This should make the matter personal and call for personal application of the teaching, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."

Probably this is the truth that many people need to recognize today not only to give meaning and value to this teaching by showing the personal need for it, but to reveal to them more fully this personal need for much of God's teaching that is being neglected. As Peter puts the matter, "ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). And as Paul wrote, "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (I Cor. 6:19, 20). One of the greatest needs today among religious people is the recognition of the fact that every "member of the church," or member of the body of Christ, is a part of that holy temple, or is a temple for the indwelling of God. This would give a more meaningful conception of Christianity.

Having shown these Christians that the very nature of their relationship to God demands that they be not yoked with unbelievers, Paul proceeds to show that it has an important bearing, to say the least of it, upon the promises of being children of God. This he shows by the quotation, "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing;

And I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:17,18). He then adds the exhortation, “Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1). It appears unnecessary to give any consideration to the conditions under which the statement quoted was made or the purpose for which it was made. The fact that Paul used it for the basis of his exhortation here certainly indicates that it has application to these people and to their relationship to God.

The first part of the quotation used by Paul certainly indicates that this is not a new teaching. On the contrary, the record of God’s dealings with man show that the relationship between God’s people and others has never been too close. Noah, the preacher of righteousness and his family were separated from the wicked world by the flood (Gen. 6 and 7). When Abraham was given the promise he was separated from all of his close human relationships being told to leave his kindred and his father’s house and go into a foreign land (Gen. 12: 1-3). When Abraham was given the covenant of circumcision, he was told not only to circumcise his own offspring but all that were born in his house or bought with his money (Gen. 17:13, 14,23). This meant that all of the close associates were made party to the covenant. Later we find a separation within Abraham’s own family. After Isaac was born, we are told that Sarah said unto Abraham, “Cast out this handmaid and her

son: for the son of this handmaid shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). And when Abraham was grieved over the matter, God instructed him to comply with Sarah's request. In the days of Jacob when his descendants went down into Egypt because of the famine they dwelt in the land of Goshen or the land of Ramesees apart from the Egyptians (Gen. 46 and 47). After God had led the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, he gave them the law at Mt. Sinai where he also promised them that his angel would go before them and bring them unto the nations in the land of Canaan and that if they would keep his teachings he would be an enemy of their enemies and cut them off. He also told them that little by little these people should be driven out of the land of Canaan, but he strictly charged them, "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee" (Exod. 23:32-33).

After the people of Israel had made their journey through the wilderness and were encamped on the east side of the Jordan where Moses gave to the people of Israel his final exhortations on keeping God's teaching, in speaking of the foreigners that were to be driven out of the land of Canaan, Moses declared to them, "Thou shalt make no covenant with them nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son" and gave the reason "for

he will turn away thy son from following me” (Deut. 7:2-4). When Joshua had led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, had conquered many of these foreign tribes, and had divided the land of Canaan among the people of Israel, in his farewell address he renewed this warning showing that a failure to abide by God’s instruction in keeping themselves separated from these people was evidence that they did not love God. “Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love Jehovah your God. Else, if ye do at all go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty that Jehovah your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you” (Josh. 23:11-13). Those who are acquainted with the history of the people of Israel know that they came to much grief because they failed to keep this instruction from Jehovah. Even King Solomon, the son of David, ignored God’s teaching, and the grief that came to him is described in these words, “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father” (I Kings 11:4).

Even after the people of Israel had returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity, they failed to respect this teaching. Shecaniah described the situation thus:

“We have trespassed against our God, and have married foreign women of the peoples of the land” (Ezra 10:2). And Ezra said, “Ye have trespassed, and have married foreign women, to increase the guilt of Israel” (Ezra 10:10). The people were made to put away these foreign wives even though some of them had had children born of these foreign women. The same disrespect for this teaching and disobedience to it is also to be found in the days of Nehemiah. The ugliness of it is certainly shown by the manner in which he dealt with it. “And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did foreign women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to trespass against our God in marrying foreign women?” (Neh. 13:25-27).

Now that we can evaluate the reasons given by Paul to the Corinthians that they should “be not unequally yoked with unbelievers” against this historical background, surely there is no doubt remaining that Paul expected these Christians to follow this teaching. Surely the importance of it to them could not be minimized. And surely Christians today that have come to understand that they represent “righteousness,” “light,” and “Christ,” that they are “believers,” and the “temple of God,” and

that others represent, "iniquity," "darkness," "Belial," "unbelievers," "idols"; and have the wisdom to understand that man's nature is still such that he is unable to withstand such strong negative influences and recognize the warning that should be seen in the experience of the people of Israel especially that of Solomon, they can see reason for making personal application of this teaching. And further if they recognize that the Christians at Corinth were exhorted to follow this teaching, as were the people of Israel, and recall the fact that both Ezra and Nehemiah pronounced the violation of this teaching a trespass against Jehovah, surely they cannot afford to fail to give it serious consideration. If it was applicable to Christians of Paul's day, why should it not be applicable to Christians of this age? May we examine it with reference to present day application.

For some reason it seems that people have sought grounds on which to discard this teaching, rather than seeking to see the need of its application in the lives of Christians today. Problems of interpretation have been raised with reference to each of the three principal words in the instruction, "unequally," "yoked," and "unbelievers." Some have applied the word "unequally" to the manner or mode or condition of yoking rather than to the character of the party's being yoked. They point out the fact that Paul said, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." He did not say be not "equally yoked" with unbelievers. Such an interpretation is the outgrowth of two mistakes. First the expression, "unequally yoked," which is used in the King James and American Standard

translations, has been dealt with as though it was the expression used by the Apostle Paul (A mistake that has been frequently made). Had the original been consulted, or literal translations of the original, the mistake would not have been made. As literal translations we have the expressions, "discordantly yoked" and "diversely yoked." Both of these expressions show that it is a matter of yoking things that are different in nature and does not indicate something peculiar to the manner of yoking. Therefore, it would be impossible for Christians to be equally yoked with unbelievers. Some people think that this expression, "unequally yoked," is strengthened through its implied reference to a forbidden practice among the Jews, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. 22:10). Whether there is any particular reference to this practice or not, it is an illustration of diverse yoking and should make it clear that there is no possible way of yoking an ox and an ass so as to remove the diverseness of their natures.

The second mistake that permitted the erroneous interpretation given above was the failure to observe that the first reason given by Paul for not being unequally yoked with unbelievers is shown to be the diverse or discordant character of its nature. How could righteousness and iniquity, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, etc., ever be made equal? Neither can believers and unbelievers ever be made equal so long as they remain such.

The next matter of disagreement relative to the teaching that Christians should not be unequally yoked with

unbelievers concerns the word "yoked." To what relationships does it refer? Dr. McKnight makes it refer to the relationship of marriage only; while Dr. Clark, granting that one may apply the exhortation to the relationship of marriage, declares that this was certainly not what the apostle intended. Since there is no term used in the immediate context that in any way limits the application of yoked, and since a special exhortation for cleansing and perfecting holiness accompanies the teaching, it appears reasonable to consider that every relationship that is such that unbelievers may exert a harmful influence, may be included. And also since quotations from past teaching are used as a basis for the exhortation, it is natural to suppose that the relationships of the past against which the people had been warned were surely included if not definitely intended. It is apparent from the statements that have already been quoted that covenants and marriages were the ones that had been specifically forbidden. In view of the nature of the covenants referred to, and the nature of the marriage relationship, it appears reasonable to conclude that the definitely arranged permanent or semi-permanent types of relationships with binding mutual interests are the ones that have been given special attention; and certainly they are the ones that are most likely to provide an effective harmful influence. We should not lose sight of the fact, however, that this teaching to Christians is for their own protection. And Christians who are worthy of the name, those who love God, will be governed by the principle of the teaching

and not be limited to the particular application of which we have record among the Jews. The present day relationships that appear to come within this classification are the marriage relationship, some of the fraternal relationships, some of the business partnerships, and some employment relationships. Of these the marriage relationship is the only one to which the New Testament teaching makes reference. However, this should not be taken to mean that this is the only relationship to which the teaching applies, but rather that it was the only one to which there was occasion for making reference in the inspired writing. This mention is found in the first letter to the Corinthians only and may have given rise to the need for the instruction that they should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, as this instruction was also written to the Corinthians only.

Let us consider the situation at Corinth. We learn from I Corinthians 7:1 that they had written to Paul relative to matters concerning marriage. And from the discussion that follows we learn that one of their questions must have concerned believers living with unbelievers in the marriage relationship. The question was not should a believer marry an unbeliever, but should a believer continue to live with an unbeliever. But let us consider Paul's treatment as he presents it.

He first states the basic law that governs the marriage relationship. "But unto the married I give charge yea not I, but the Lord. That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that

the husband leave not his wife" (I Cor. 7:10-11). He states it briefly but clearly and reminds them that it comes from divine authority. This is still the law that should govern the marriage relationship. Unfortunately, however, it is being disrespected by an increasingly large number of people from generation to generation. And unless the respect for it is restored, this is very likely to continue because of the increasing number of youthful marriages and the growing ignorance of basic Bible teaching. In view of this situation and also the fact that some people have confused Paul's teaching relative to the matter under discussion with the basic law of the relationship in such a way as to justify their ignoring the basic law, it appears that it would be helpful to the understanding of the present generation to expand upon Paul's brief statement of the law.

First, let us observe that this has been the law of relationship from the beginning. When man and woman were first brought together in this relationship, we have this testimony—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). To this Jesus also bore witness, "And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh" (Matt. 19:4-6). And to this Paul also testified, "Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, The twain, saith he, shall

become one flesh" (I Cor. 6:16). "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" (Eph. 5:31).

Second, let us recognize that regardless of what man's practice has been and regardless of what men have taught or may teach, God's law of the marriage relationship has not changed. It is "That the wife depart not from her husband and that the husband leave not his wife." To this Jesus bore direct testimony when he asked "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so" (Matt. 19:7-8).

The very reason for Moses granting the bill of divorcement is also the reason that people who love God and would keep his commandments will not accept it. It was because of the hardness of their hearts. These were not people who believed in God and who loved God. They had been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). Through an evil heart of unbelief they had fallen away from the living God (Heb. 3:12). They were people who were rebellious and idolatrous. As Jehovah said unto Samuel, "According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee" (I Sam. 8:8). They were under a curse (Gal. 3:10), living under a law by which they could not be

justified because it was not a law of faith (Gal. 3:11-12). Thus it is clear that Moses was dealing with a civil problem and not a religious one. He was leading a people who for the most part had turned their backs upon Jehovah. So Moses was keeping peace among them just as the civil authorities do today. And the people today whose hearts have been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin will avail themselves of the civil license even though it is contrary to God's law of the relationship.

Third, we should learn that there is but one ground upon which to fail to comply with this law, and one who fails on any other is guilty of adultery. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:9). "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

Fourth, we should not overlook the fact that this is a universal law, that it applies to all who marry. There are some people today who are disposed to apply this law to Christian people but excuse others from the obligation to comply with it. When John the Baptist told Herod it was unlawful for him to have his brother Philip's wife (Mark 6:16), Herod was not a Christian, neither is there any evidence that he had been baptized of John's baptism. They teach that if a Christian divorces his partner and marries another, he is guilty of the sin of adultery and should not expect forgiveness for it until

he separates himself from the adulterous relationship. But the person who had done exactly the same thing before becoming a Christian, upon his acceptance of the Gospel is forgiven and may continue to live in his adulterous relationship. This teaching is rather difficult to accept. Is it reasonable to think that God will forgive one of the sin of adultery and overlook his sinful relationship when he accepts the gospel through faith in the blood of Christ, but will not forgive one of his children the sin of adultery until he has separated himself from the adulterous relationship, even though he seeks forgiveness through faith in that same blood of Christ? If one were a member of a highjacking gang or of a ring of thieves and accepted the gospel, would he be forgiven if he continued in the sinful relationship and continued to participate in the activities of the relationship; while if a Christian is going to be forgiven for such, he must discontinue those practices? Can one be forgiven except he repent and can one truly repent without turning away from these things that are displeasing in the sight of God? Is the sin of adultery only the first act of that relationship or does the sinful state continue so long as the individual continues to indulge in the acts of that illicit relationship? From the wording of the rebuke which John the Baptist gave to Herod, it certainly appears to be the latter, "For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matt. 14:4). "For John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). John did not say to Herod, "it was unlawful for you to take your brother's wife," but

he said, "it is unlawful for you to have her."

If the first act that brings one into an adulterous relationship is the only part that is sinful and the continuation in the relationship accompanied by a repetition of the same act is not sinful, then why cannot the Christian who is guilty of adultery be forgiven and continue to live in that same adulterous relationship? And if it is not right for the Christian to continue to live in the adulterous relationship, how can it be right for one who has come into Christ to continue in his adulterous relationship, continuing to repeat the act that brought him into the relationship? This would make it appear that when the adulterer accepts Christ he is not only forgiven the sin of the past but is granted the license to continue his indulgence in the same acts as a Christian that were sinful before he became a Christian, acts that would be sinful were he to begin them with a new party after becoming a Christian. In other words, he would be a Christian with special privileges. This may be true but I would be afraid to risk it and I would be afraid to teach it.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 14

1. What is the negative obligation we are to consider in this lesson and the next?
2. Who will not recognize the danger in the failure to meet this obligation?
3. Under what conditions will one find this teaching by Paul difficult to understand?
4. Under what condition may people pass this lesson lightly or even ignore it?

5. Under what conditions will one find this lesson in complete harmony with the rest of the Bible teaching?
6. Under what condition will the grave need for this lesson be recognized?
7. Give Paul's statement of the lesson.
8. What questions did Paul ask to show the conflicting interests of Christians and unbelievers?
9. How does Paul make the matter personal?
10. What is one of the greatest needs today among religious people?
11. How does Paul show the important bearing of this teaching upon the promises of being children of God?
12. Paul made these promises the basis for what appeal?
13. Show fully that the need for the separation of God's people from others is not a new teaching.
14. What reason did Moses give the people of Israel that they should make no covenant and no marriages with the peoples of Canaan?
15. What reason did Joshua give for not making covenants with them?
16. What outstanding king suffered for violating this teaching?
17. How did Nehemiah show the ugliness of violating this teaching?
18. What should cause people today to see reason in making personal application of this teaching?
19. What does it appear that people have sought rather than seeking to see the need of application of this teaching?
20. What is the meaning of "unequally yoked"?
21. Why can a Christian not be "equally yoked" with an unbeliever?
22. What relationships among the Jewish people are especially mentioned in this teaching of separation?
23. What present day relationships appear to come within this classification?
24. Of these relationships which is the only one to which the New Testament specifically makes reference?
25. With what people was it discussed, and what condition among them seems to have given rise to the teaching?

26. Give Paul's statement of the basic law of marriage?
27. Show that this has been the basic law of the marriage relationship from the beginning.
28. Show that this law has not changed.
29. Among what kind of people did Moses permit exception to this law?
30. What is the one ground upon which exception may be allowed today?
31. Show that the law applies to people today who are not Christian as well as to those who are.
32. Show that being baptized does not give one permission to continue to live in his adulterous relationship.

LESSON 15

BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED (Continued)

Hoping that the basic law of the marriage relationship has been sufficiently discussed to impress everyone with the importance of the divine teaching that was briefly stated by Paul, we shall return to the discussion of the problem in hand.

Having stated the commandment which the Lord had given to those who were married, Paul proceeds to make application of it to the case of believers who were married to unbelievers. This he introduces with these words, "but to the rest say I, not the Lord." There are two things that should be evident from this procedure: first, the law of marriage as given by the Lord himself applied in this case as well as in all others where there was no sin of adultery, and, second, what Paul said in regard to this case would be in complete harmony with this law. Paul makes the application in these words, "If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband" (I Cor. 7:12-13). Then to encourage the believers to accept this teaching Paul added, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now

are they holy” (I Cor. 7:14). By this Paul certainly did not mean Christian sanctification but sanctification to purity in the marriage relationship. After showing that becoming a Christian did not relieve one from the obligation of complying with the law of marriage and assuring them that their children would not be unclean if the sanctity of marriage were maintained, he reminds them, “Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace” (I Cor. 7:15). Some people have taken this to mean that if the unbeliever becomes offended because his partner has become a Christian and refuses to continue in the marriage relationship that the believer is completely free and may be married to someone else. If this be the case, Paul has departed from the Lord’s charge to those who were married that he stated in the beginning as the foundation for showing these people that they had no grounds for initiating a separation, for such would be a condition for nullifying the marriage relationship which the Lord had never given. It appears more reasonable to understand “not under bondage in such cases” to mean that should the unbeliever depart, the believer would be freed from the obligation of continuing to live in that relationship that some had come to consider questionable. He or she would not be guilty of breaking the marriage vow. This understanding is also in harmony with the statement made by the apostle at the close of the chapter, “A wife is bound for so long as her husband liveth; but if the husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she

will; only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:9). In fact, Paul is seeking to make these people content to continue in their marriage relationship rather than seeking justification for separation and remarriage. To encourage it further, he calls to their attention the opportunity of saving the unbeliever if the marriage is continued. He further encourages them to remain in their relationship as he continues his discussion: "Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches. Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it; but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's Freedman; likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God" (I Cor. 7:17-24).

From this discussion it should be evident that Paul did not set aside the Lord's teaching on the marriage relationship in any respect. The fact that the husband or the wife became a Christian and the other rejected the gospel, did not justify the believer in separating from the unbeliever. Neither did a separation of the unbeliever from the believer because he had accepted the gospel make void the marriage relationship setting the

believer free to be married to someone else. God's law has not changed. Therefore, the teaching that Paul has given in this case should never be construed to give consolation to anyone who has divorced a marriage partner and married another. The Lord himself has made it plain that the marriage relationship is voided only through the act of adultery or by death.

We have seen that no special privileges were granted so far as the marriage relationship is concerned to the married person who became a Christian whose husband or wife remained an unbeliever. But we do find special instruction given to a Christian wife whose husband dies, in regard to her being married again. After discussing the marriage of virgins, before Paul leaves the subject of marriage, he declares, "A wife is bound for so long a time as her husband liveth but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39). This is a plain statement and can mean but one thing. If the husband of a Christian wife dies, she is free to be married again, but only to a man who is a Christian, and what was true of Christian women under such circumstances surely applied to Christian men also. Thus it is clear that Christian widows and Christian widowers were plainly taught by the Apostle Paul that they should marry Christians, that they should "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."

But those who have not become sufficiently spiritual-minded to be aware of the need of God's children for spiritual growth, or the grave handicap to spiritual growth that is posed by the neutral or negative influence of a

non-Christian marriage partner, may point to the fact that this instruction was to people who have been married before and then ask, "Where is such teaching in the New Testament directed specifically to Christian people who have not been married?" The answer to this question is that there is none, but there are definite and unmistakable implications that such was taught and practiced. The care that was exercised by Paul to make it plain to the Corinthians who were living with unbelievers that their state of religious disagreement neither demanded nor justified their violating God's law of marriage, that the relationship was not inherently defiling, and that it might serve as an opportunity to save the unbelievers, surely indicates that there were some among the Corinthians who felt so strongly about the matter that they were considering leaving their unbelieving partners, or were being urged to do so. For people to become so concerned about such that they wrote Paul in regard to it certainly indicates that they had taken far more seriously than most of the Christians of our day the teachings that they should "put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:24); that they should increase and abound in love that they might be "unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (I Thess. 3:12-13); and that they should cleanse themselves "from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Surely if the teaching that they had received on purity, holiness, and sanctification had led

them to give any consideration to the necessity of disrupting their families by separating from unbelieving husbands or wives, it would have led them to believe that marrying unbelievers was just out of the question. This appears to be even more logical when we recall the state of conflict that apparently existed between believers and unbelievers of Paul's day, whether Jews or Gentiles. This idea is further supported by Paul's advice to them, "as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy" (I Cor. 7:25), if they were not married not to marry (I Cor. 7:27). Then he gave his reason in these words, "But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided. So also the woman that is unmarried and the virgin is careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married is careful for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (I Cor. 7:32-34). If Paul would advise them under the circumstances not to marry at all that they might "attend upon the Lord without distraction," without doubt he would have specifically warned them against the danger of marrying unbelievers had that been a thing that would have been seriously considered. Certainly Paul must have considered such teaching unnecessary under the circumstances.

Another implication that the religious convictions of the Corinthian people were against the marriage of believers to unbelievers is shown by the question which

Paul asked about his own right of marriage. "Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (I Cor. 9:5). The point which Paul's question was asked to support did not require mention of the fact that the wife be a believer, if the failure to mention it would not have left Paul open to censure; and there is little reason that he would have been open to censure had the Christians at Corinth not held the conviction that Christians should not be married to unbelievers.

Not only do we have scriptural implications that the Christians of Paul's day who had never been married, as well as those who had been married, were taught not to marry unbelievers, but also the very nature of Christianity demands that the teaching apply to both classes. It is inconceivable that an all-wise God who loves his children, and who knows their weaknesses and the dangers of their being turned away from him by the ever increasing influence of binding relationships with those who know not God, would shield those who are older, more mature, and more experienced by teaching them not to marry unbelievers but leave the younger, the less mature, and the less experienced open to the dangers of such relationships by giving them no teaching against marrying unbelievers. Would God protect the stronger with divine guidance and abandon the weaker to their own ignorance? Would God nurse the adults and ignore the babies?

The third matter of disagreement relative to the teaching, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," is the

question, who are unbelievers? There are two things that have contributed to the difficulty. First, the word “infidel” that is used in the King James version in II Cor. 6:15 as a synonym for “unbeliever” has been given the modern popular meaning, “one who avowedly denies the tenets of Christianity and the truth of the scriptures.” This change has made Paul’s statement apply to a particular class of unbelievers thus making his statement mean what he did not say. The word used by the apostle that is translated, “infidel,” is a modified form of the word that is translated, “Believer,” and simply means “one who does not believe.” The other thing that has added to the difficulty of understanding is the failure of the religious world to agree upon the meaning of the word, “believer.” Since an “unbeliever” or an “infidel” is the designation that is given to the one who is not a believer, we must be able to identify the believer in order to be able to identify the unbeliever. From this it is obvious that Paul is thinking of all people as being in these two classes. They are either believers or unbelievers (with this picture in mind we can see the appropriateness of Adam Clark’s translation of “Be not unequally yoked,” which is “keep in your own rank”). If we can locate the proper line of demarcation between these two groups or classes we can identify unbelievers and know those with whom Christians should not be unequally yoked.

First, let us consider these words as they applied at the time they were used. Paul certainly was writing in terms of the conditions that existed among the people to whom he was writing that he might be properly understood.

When we recall the fact that this was written about A. D. 57, only about 25 years after the apostles began to preach the gospel and before there were many Christian people, we recognize that with reference to Christianity there were only two classes of people—those who had accepted Jesus as the Christ and those who had not. These were the believers and the unbelievers. The line of demarcation between believers and unbelievers of that day probably was made even more distinct by the persecution that many of the people who accepted Christ suffered, a persecution that may have occurred occasionally even within one's own family, as Jesus foretold would come to pass (Mark 13:12).

Although there were only two classes of people, speaking from the standpoint of Christianity, we must not assume that each of these classes was homogeneous. There was, however, one outstanding characteristic difference between the classes that was borne by each member of the respective classes. The believers had accepted the gospel, the unbelievers had failed to accept the gospel. By speaking of all those who had accepted Christ as "believers," there is no intention to imply that they all fully enjoyed equal status with God, for some may have been faithful while others were unfaithful. Neither can we assume that they all believed and practiced exactly the same teachings. In fact, Paul's first letter to these Corinthian people evidences a lack of uniformity among them on both counts. However, we do have reason to believe that those who accepted Christ did so according to the same pattern, for we are confident that all of

the apostles and the early teachers of the gospel were preaching the same thing. Paul gave a brief description of this pattern by which the Galatians had entered into that relationship, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26), even though some of them appeared to be on the verge of making the relationship worthless (Gal. 5:2-4), and probably some had already done so (Gal. 1:6).

After Paul's brief statement of the manner in which they became sons of God, as evidence he added, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). This was the objective sign that they were sons of God or believers. The Apostle Peter showed the vital place, this objective sign that they were sons of God held in the pattern by this statement, "When the longsuffering 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 the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (I Pet. 3:20-21). By speaking of all those who had rejected the gospel as unbelievers, it does not mean that they were all alike. There is little doubt that the people in this class ranged all the way from rank idolaters to those who were favorably impressed with the truth and were friendly toward those who had accepted the truth and who were living morally upright lives. All of these, however, had rejected Jesus as the Christ, had rejected the only Saviour of men. They had not been cleansed by Christ's blood; they were unclean.

From this look at the situation in Paul's day, it is clear that the two classes referred to in some respects are very heterogeneous in nature. And it is reasonable to think that the yoking of Christians to some types of unbelievers would be much more dangerous than yoking with other types of unbelievers. However, Paul's instruction to "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" seems to apply to all. It appears that he is telling the Christians of his day not to be unequally yoked with those who have rejected Christianity.

Now let us consider the application of his instruction to the religious world of our day. We still have the two general classes composed respectively of those who have accepted what they believe to be Christianity and those who have rejected Christianity—the believers and the unbelievers. It is true that in some respects, the people who claim to have accepted Christianity today are a much more heterogeneous group than were those who accepted it in Paul's day. There are two outstanding differences. In Paul's day, all followed the same pattern in accepting the gospel or becoming sons of God as it was set forth by the apostles' teaching. Today, variability rather than conformity to the apostles' teaching seems to be the rule. The practice ranges all the way from a sudden mental change to a strict conformity to the apostles' teaching. In Paul's day there was one body of people or one church with some illfounded convictions and some disparity between convictions and practice; but today there are between two and three hundred churches with their accepted group modifications of the

gospel teaching, as well as hundreds of individual conflicting interpretations of the teaching. This is a most puzzling and a most shocking situation, since all propose to follow the same teaching of which they have an exact copy and may study it as much as they need. The people of this generation who have rejected the gospel range all the way from atheists who are avowed enemies of the gospel to those who say they believe that Jesus is the Christ but refuse to accept him as such. The idolatry has changed from the worship of images to worship of the God of this world and in their dealings with men they range from the most diabolically wicked to the most acceptably moral. They represent human disposition from the horrid to the most delicately pleasing. These people represent such an extreme range of differences that it is difficult to think of them as being in the same class. But according to the Bible measure, in one important respect they are. They are all unbelievers.

This wide divergence in personal behavior among unbelievers has caused many people completely to overlook the Bible classification and to choose their close associates on the basis of personal qualities or for their own personal advantage, "Being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). We should not overlook the fact that unbelievers, those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have not become Christians, may be people who are highly intelligent, well-educated, and economically successful. They may be people who are morally good and socially

attractive, but they are unbelievers. They are people who have rejected the Christ. They are people who have made God a liar (I John 5:10). In spite of all their attractiveness, they are still the children of the devil.

Can one who is a child of God, who loves God, who partakes of God's nature, and who is seeking to honor him among men afford to become unequally yoked to a child of the devil? How can we be true, faithful children of God and so completely forget who we are? Where is the earthly father who could look with favor upon one of his children who had entered into a perpetual partnership with one who had rejected him as a liar even if he did occasionally pay him a verbal compliment? Then why should we expect our father in heaven to be pleased with us when we make many of our closest earthly ties with people who have dishonored him after the same pattern? How can we ignore the repeated warnings that God has given his people against such? How can we overlook the disfavor that God has shown toward his people of the past who entered into such relationships? How can we forget the case of Solomon who was fully warned of the danger of his heart's being turned to other gods (I Kings 11:2-4), and how can we close our eyes to the destructive effects of such relationships in our own day? Why will so many people risk their priceless souls so carelessly in their quest for social pleasure or material gain? Why will they marry children of the devil? Why will they become party to business relationships where they risk being strongly influenced by the children of the devil? Why do they become mem-

bers of labor organizations that employ methods that can be employed only by children of the devil? Why do they become members of a masonic lodge or other human order that demand that they treat the children of the devil who are members of the organization just as they would treat the children of God, and even give them preference over the children of God who are not members of that order?

It appears that the answer to the most of these questions is to be found in the failure of so many people who call themselves Christians, to be moved by the love of God and controlled by the power of the Gospel, truly becoming new creatures by giving Jesus Christ a real place in their hearts through faith. They hold a form of godliness but have failed to be brought under its power. They think of Christianity as a way of worship, not as a manner of living. This weakened, misguided condition, together with the attractiveness of the social pleasures or the financial advantages offered by the relationship, cause one to become completely unconscious of the danger to his own soul and naively forgetful of the utter disrespect he is showing for God and for the Lord Jesus Christ. This religious formalism and spiritual infantilism, together with the fact that there are so many people who have confessed Jesus to be their Lord but whose personal characteristics and manner of living are much less commendable than those of many of the sons of the devil, have blinded people to the true nature of the situation.

God grant that we may awake to a realization of what we are doing. May we come to understand that an un-

believer is one who has refused Christ a place in his life and consequently has not been born into the family of God; that such a one is a child of the devil, and that it is gravely disrespectful to God to become unequally yoked with him. May we also become fully aware that in doing so one is gambling with his eternal destiny.

There is a closely-related situation about which a question is sure to be raised. What about being yoked with a person who is a member of another church, a church with whose doctrine you cannot agree? There are some people who would say this is just as bad. There are others who would even say that it is worse. I do not agree with either of these answers. I do consider such a relationship to be fraught with serious danger and one that should be avoided, but there appears to be one point of difference between it and the relationship with one who has rejected Jesus as the Christ. The one who is a member of another church may be in error in many of his practices, may be in error in what he did to accept Christ, and even his membership in God's family may be highly questionable; but if he is sincere, if he has acted upon an honest conviction, if his manner of living shows that he is doing the best that he knows, it would be very difficult to classify him as an unbeliever. He is a believer but one living in error. His state is similar to that of the one who is a member of God's church unfaithful to his teaching. His attitude toward God is quite different from that of the person who has rejected Jesus as the Christ. It is that of honor and respect, while the other is dishonor and disrespect. Although one who considers him-

self to be a true Christian would have much more in common with a sincere member of another church than with a non-church member and would not appear to be showing that same disrespect for God by entering into the relationship, he would be gambling with his future destiny and, in the case of the marriage relationship, hazarding the future of his children, the peace of his home, and its effectiveness as an influence for Christ. But what if the non-church member claims to believe that Jesus is the Christ, is a good moral person and attends the same church? To this I would say, "Actions speak louder than words." Such are not the actions of a believer and are not accepted by God as such. He may believe there is one God, but demons did as well. James declared that "Demons also believe and shudder" (Jas. 2:19). He may theoretically accept the fact that Jesus is the son of God and even confess him, but the demons in the first century did as much (Mark 5:1-6).

Frequently, in defense of the practice of marrying non-church people or people of other churches, the plea is made that by doing so, people are won to the truth. Occasionally, a person is heard to say that if he had not married a Christian, he would never have been a Christian, or never would have exchanged his former church membership, which he now considers in error, for his present membership, which he believes to be right. Certainly in either of these cases, there may be a wide variety of circumstances, and it is true that circumstances alter cases, but it is also true that there are limits of right and wrong beyond which circumstances cannot alter

cases. In our effort to win people to Christ, we may accept risks that are reasonable, but it is folly to accept those that are doubtful, and it is sinful to accept those that dishonor and disrespect God. There is reason under some circumstances in marrying a person who is a member of another church, but reason has been exchanged for foolhardiness when a Christian disrespects God by marrying a child of the devil. After all, would it not be far better to become a Christian of such spiritual status with such a genuine respect for God that you would accept as your partner for life only one with whom you are in agreement on basic Bible teaching, only one who is interested in being a Christian, one who will help you to be a Christian? Why not convert one to Christ before becoming yoked with him, instead of accepting one who is an unbeliever or one who is converted to a church?

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 15

1. How does Paul show that God's law of marriage was applicable to the case of the believer who was married to an unbeliever?
2. How did Paul encourage these believers to comply with this law of marriage under the circumstances?
3. Under what condition were they not required to continue to live with the unbeliever?
4. Show that it is unlikely that Paul was meaning to say that such a one was free to be married to another person.
5. How does Paul further encourage the believer to continue to live with the unbeliever who is willing to do so?
6. What is evident from this discussion?
7. What special instruction is given to the Christian man or woman about marrying a second time if a former husband or wife has died?

8. Although we have no record where this particular teaching was addressed to people who had not been married, what are the definite implications that such was taught and practiced?
9. What New Testament teaching do the Corinthians seem to have taken more seriously than the Christians of our day have?
10. What reason did Paul give for advising Christians at that time not to marry?
11. Show that the very nature of Christianity demands that the teaching not to marry unbelievers applies to those who had never been married as well as those who had.
12. Who are believers and who are unbelievers?
13. Describe the variations to be found in each class.
14. What suggested that those who had accepted Christ in that day did so after the same pattern?
15. Compare the people of today who claim to have accepted Christianity with those of Paul's day.
16. Compare the unbelievers today with those of Paul's day.
17. What has caused many people today to overlook this powerful classification of believers and unbelievers?
18. What shows the ugliness of a believer becoming yoked with an unbeliever whether in marriage or otherwise even though the unbeliever claims to believe and has many good characteristics in common with believers?
19. What conditions have blinded many people who call themselves Christians to the true nature of the situation and led them to ignore this teaching?
20. What do we need to come to understand about this matter?
21. What is the difference between marrying an unbeliever and a member of another church?
22. Why cannot the non-church member who claims to believe that Jesus is the Christ be considered a believer?
23. What defense is often made by one who marries a member of another church or non-church member?
24. What is the final advice given on this matter of marriage?

LESSON 16

RENDER UNTO CAESAR

Every Bible student recognizes the above caption as a part of a statement made by Jesus himself which has come to be used commonly to refer to one's obligations to the civil government under which he lives. "And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mark 12:17). This has been generally understood to mean that Christians have obligations to the civil government, but there is considerable disagreement as to what the obligations are. The major purpose of this study shall be to present the Bible teachings by which these obligations must be determined. Since the Bible gives us no definite list or complete description of the Christian's obligations to civil government, it is necessary that we consider a number of the basic teachings of Christianity to provide a background or context that will give more accurate meaning to the direct statements that are made.

May we begin with an examination of the complete statement which Jesus made on this occasion? Jesus not only said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," but continuing said, "and unto God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). Thus Jesus was not only telling the people to fulfill their obligations to Caesar but

also to fulfill their obligations to God. From this we reasonably infer that there were things which belonged to God that did not belong to Caesar and that should not be rendered to Caesar. Since relationships determine obligations, this is another way of saying that each of these relationships should be respected; and since Jesus' statement was made in reply to a question that concerned only one obligation, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" (Mark 12:14), it is evident that we will have to consider the relationships in order to arrive at a correct understanding of our obligations to God and our obligations to the civil government. Let us bear in mind the fact that we are studying the Christian's obligations and, consequently, will concern ourselves with the Christian's relationships.

Let us recall some of the things that we have learned about the Christian's relationship to God and Christ that will make us more conscious of the Christian's obligations to God. The Christian's relationship to God is his supreme relationship and its basic obligation is implicit obedience. Therefore we may safely conclude that there is no other relationship, civil or otherwise, whose obligations should require that which belongs to God or whose obligations should interfere with implicit obedience to God. This is further supported by the very manner in which we came into our relationship with God. We were bought with a price, we were purchased by the precious blood of Jesus. We are to live unto him who for our sakes died and rose again. We were redeemed, bought back from following our own lusts in which change we

accepted Jesus as our Lord, as our ruler, which makes further demand for implicit obedience. We are his servants. As his servants, we have a service to render, we have a mission to fill. Our service is to man. We are to turn him away from his sinfulness and to bring him to God, to rescue him from the way to destruction and lead him into the way to life eternal. We are to make Jesus' blood, the redemptive price, meaningful to him by showing forth the goodness of God and the excellences of Christ in our manner of living, and by so doing to show forth the light of life. This is the obligation of each individual Christian, and surely this sacred obligation not only forbids other obligations that would interfere with the effort demanded but also those that would interfere with the influence of the life that should be lived. We have also learned that they that are Christ's, they that are to fulfill this sacred purpose, have been especially qualified for their work. They have not only been redeemed from living for themselves to live unto God but they have been purified through the blood of Christ. They have been cleansed from the filth of their past living and sanctified to the service of God in holiness. They have been shown that if they are to accomplish this mission, if they are to inherit the blessings of life eternal, they must maintain this holiness by keeping themselves unspotted from the world. Further, we have learned that they that are Christ's have been reconciled to God. They have been changed from enemies to friends. Their relationship to God imposes the obligations of friends. They must love God and show the faithfulness of friends.

They are to respect his wishes as friends. They that are Christ's are also children of God. This not only demands love, honor, and obedience but reminds us that we have been begotten of God and must partake of his nature. We must drink of his Spirit. We must abide in God and he must abide in us. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his. We must truly be new creatures dedicated to a new way of life. Surely such people have no obligation as a result of any other relationship that is permitted to interfere with such a life of holiness or that will unnecessarily endanger it.

Now since our relationship to civil government is a human relationship and the obligations entailed are the obligations of a man to his fellowmen, let us call to mind some of the obligations of a Christian to his fellowman that are demanded by his relationship to God. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace

to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. 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. 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. 4:25-5:2). "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:12-15). "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:1-4). "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent

in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. 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. 12:9-21). These quotations show plainly the obligations of Christians to their fellows, the obligations of each Christian to his fellows, as demanded by the Christian relationship, by the Christian's relationship to God, his supreme relationship, his relationship that must be fully respected and thoroughly honored.

Keeping in mind this review of the Christian's obligations to his fellowman that are imposed by his relationship to God, we shall examine the Bible teaching on the Christian's relationship to civil government. The description of this relationship insofar as it is given in the Bible is to be found in the following quotations: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is

no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:1-7). "Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work, to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men" (Titus 3:1-2). "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Pet. 2:13-17). "I exhort, there-

fore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for the kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity” (I Tim. 2:1-2).

We have no definite information as to the conditions among the people to whom these letters were addressed that called forth this instruction on the Christian's relationship to civil government, but it appears that some had been so deeply impressed with the fact that they were servants of God and should serve Jesus as Lord that they had rejected civil government or were in danger of doing so. It is also likely that they dishonored it and disrespected it in many ways especially in the refusal to pay taxes to support it. This is rather clearly reflected in the instruction addressed to the Christians at Rome. Hence, the purpose of Paul's discussion of this matter was to correct this misconception, not to explain all of the details of the relationship. This was set forth in his one exhortation which was made at the very beginning. "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers." "Every soul" evidently has reference to Christians, not to the total national population for not only is the letter addressed to Christians but also the reasons that are given for heeding the exhortation are those that appeal to Christians.

Paul proceeded at once to show them why they should heed this exhortation. His first reason was that civil government has divine power. It was "ordained of God." "For there is no power but of God." In this he reminds them of the fact that the all-powerful God who made the

universe has not deserted his creatures giving them no protection from the devastating forces of evil, but according to his own wisdom and after his own methods of working out, he has his own way in controlling the powers among men and overruling them to serve his general purpose and often to serve in a special way. This does not necessarily mean that God controls and directs all the detailed activity of the respective civil powers, for he did not do this even in the government of Israel, his own people. Neither is it necessary that we think of God as being responsible for all of the happenings in the adjustment of the civil powers among men, but after the secrets of his own will and evidently through the workings of human wisdom or intelligence he has appointed or brought this agency into being. After showing the authority of civil powers over God's people by declaring that they were of divine origin, Paul showed the seriousness of resisting them when he declared "He that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God" and reminded that such would receive judgment or condemnation.

After having shown that civil power was of divine origin, Paul proceeded to show that it was to serve a divine purpose. He declared "He is a minister of God to thee for good." This statement is made, of course, on the assumption that they "do that which is good." He added "But if thou do that which is evil be afraid for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is a minister of God and avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." Thus Paul made it clear to them that civil government had its place

in God's scheme of things, that through it God provided a ministration of protection for his people for those who would do that which was good by being a minister of God to avenge that which was evil. Having thus described to them their relationship to civil government he declared their basic obligation. "Wherefore, ye must needs be in subjection." Then he gave two reasons for their fulfilling this obligation: "Not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake."

May we observe again that the purpose of this discussion was to reveal to the Christians at Rome their true relationship to civil government that they might feel the Christian obligation to accept it and live in subjection to it. When Peter wrote to the Christians of the dispersion in Asia Minor urging that they be subject "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" and mentioned its "vengeance on evil doers and praise to them that do well," in brief he was reminding them of this same relationship which imposed the same obligation. Titus was told to remind the people of Crete of this basic obligation. Timothy was instructed that prayers should be made "for kings and all that are in high place" that Christians might profit by their rule.

After having shown the Christians at Rome their true relationship to civil government and their basic obligation to live in subjection to it, Paul turned to the special obligation of support. Just why, we are not told. It must have been that for some reason they were expected to find greater difficulty in accepting and complying with this obligation. If they were rejecting civil government

because of religious scruples, and we know of no other reason for honest, sincere, moral people's doing so, then certainly supporting that which they had considered to be evil in character would be their most crucial test, so Paul urged "For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing" (Rom. 13:6). Surely if they accepted the various agencies of civil government as ministers of God, rendering service to God's people they would recognize their relationship to government and their obligation to support it. It is interesting to note the further emphasis given by Paul to this obligation in his closing exhortation. In urging their subjection to higher powers, he further encouraged support by referring to the two most common areas from which it would come: tribute and custom. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:7).

Now that we have examined all of the direct teaching on the Christian's relationship to civil government and also his obligations in the relationship that are given in the New Testament teaching, what have we found? First, it is very clear that the Christians of that day were taught that civil government was divinely ordained, and, consequently, their relationship to it was to be fully respected, not only to avoid punishment but also for conscience sake. Writing of this obligation, Peter urged, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Second, because civil government was "a minister of God" and rendering service to God's people, they

should “pay tribute” or support it. A third thing that was made clear was the fact that civil government was God’s agency of vengeance.

This statement of the matter appears to be simple and direct and very unlikely to give rise to disagreement. However, the most frequent disagreement over Bible teaching is not over what the Bible says but what it means. Therefore the question which concerns us next is what is the meaning of this teaching? Were those people being taught that regardless of what was commanded by the civil government it must be obeyed “for conscience sake”? There are some people who seem to think this is what it means and appear to justify a Christian in engaging in activity that is unchristian in character because it is a ruling of the civil government or even because the civil government permits it. But what did the apostles understand it to mean? Although we have no record of their verbal interpretation of the matter, we are told of some of their experiences which show their application of the teaching.

After the healing of the lame man by Peter and John at the beautiful gate of the temple, we are told, “And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide” (Acts 4:1-3). “And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem”

(Acts 4:5). These were the Jewish civil authorities. After discussing the case, "And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). The apostles continued their preaching "And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27-29). Surely, these Christians who were divinely inspired did not fail to fulfil their obligations in their relationship to this divinely appointed authority; therefore, their refusal to obey this edict showed two things. First, that when a civil power makes a demand of Christians which conflicts with their obligation to God, it has evidently exceeded its divinely granted authority. Second, when a civil power made such demands of Christians it was not only their privilege to ignore them but it was their sacred obligation to do so, and to be faithful to their relationship to God regardless of the cost.

The Christians of the first century seem to have already learned this lesson, for many others as well as the apostles had suffered at the hands of civil authorities, both Roman and Jewish, and their conviction that their

relationship to God came first was so strong that many were inclined to reject completely their relationship to civil government. Therefore, the New Testament teaching on the matter sought to correct their attitude toward civil government but gave no warning against its interference with Christians' meeting their obligations to God.

The obligation to pay tribute or taxes was given meaning by showing that it was reasonable. They were only helping to pay for the service which they enjoyed. Surely people with Christian ideals could see reason in paying for that which they received.

What was the meaning of Paul's statement to those Christians that civil government is "a minister of God, an avenger of wrath to him that doeth evil"? In order to answer this question, we need especially to call to mind a teaching that had evidently been well taught in that day which Paul as a minister of God had especially pointed out to the Christians at Rome in leading up to this discussion of civil government. (It may appear to us to be farther removed from Paul's discussion than it really is by the fact that the two teachings are in separate chapters, but we should remember that there was no such break in Paul's manuscript.) In the very last verses of Chapter 12, Paul sternly warned, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God." Then to support it he quoted, "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12: 19). He further instructed them, "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"

(Rom. 12:20), and followed this by stating a basic principal of Christian living, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). After teaching these people that, as Christians, under no circumstances should they take vengeance upon those who wronged them, for vengeance belonged unto God; but that they should manifest the Spirit of Christ by doing them good. Surely this teaching that civil government was a minister of God, an avenger of wrath upon those that do evil, was understood to mean that civil government was God's agency for avenging the wrongs done to his people. Thus this protection provided through a general agency that was in no sense allied with Christianity would leave them completely free to manifest the Spirit of Christ. Further it should be observed that civil government was God's minister of vengeance and not the Christian's minister of vengeance. It was an agency that somehow operated according to God's own plan and not one through which the Christian was to take vengeance upon those who did him wrong. In that case the Christian would still be taking vengeance and his claim to have the Spirit of Christ would make his position both inconsistent and intolerable. Paul made it unmistakably clear to the Christians at Corinth that they should not take vengeance upon each other through the agency of civil government. He wrote, "but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers. Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do

wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren" (I Cor. 6: 6-8). The question "Why not rather take wrong?" certainly classed their lawsuits as acts of vengeance, and although we have no record where Christians were condemned for having lawsuits with non-Christians as a matter of vengeance, certainly if such were acts of vengeance between brethren they would be understood as acts of vengeance against others; and when Paul charged the Christians at Rome, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved," he did not limit it to the brethren, but evidently it applied to all mankind.

Now that we have an understanding of God's teaching on the Christian's relationship to civil government as it was given to the Christians of the first century, since it is the only guide for Christians of the twentieth century, let us attempt to make application of it in the lives of the Christian people of today who live under the American form of democratic government. May we approach this important task prayerfully and fully conscious of our basic Christian responsibility to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And may we not for one moment forget that if we are Christians, our supreme and most sacred relationship is that which we hold with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ. And, further, may we be perpetually aware of the fact that as Christians we, and we alone, have not only the privilege but the fearful obligation of holding forth the word of life. And may we know assuredly that this mission can be accomplished only by those who have been redeemed, purified, sanctified, and

reconciled to God, those who have become imitators of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, having become partakers of their nature; those who are filled with their spirit and are striving to keep themselves unspotted from the world that they may live unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. And above all, may God grant each one of us an indelible conviction of the fact that every Christian has his individual share in this responsibility. Since man's relationship to God, with its accompanying obligations, has not changed and neither has his need for purity and sanctification changed; and since man's relationship to civil government is still a divinely appointed relationship as it was in the first century, with its same divine function as "minister of vengeance," there seems to be no reason for assuming that the Christians' obligations to civil government have changed. In fact, the only thing that has changed is the form of civil government, and this should, in no wise, change the Christian's relationship to it. However, this change in form of civil government has given rise to a question, the answer to which is the key to the proper understanding of the Christian's obligations to civil government today. The question is "What part should the Christian take in the activities of the civil government?" As we have already seen, the Christians of Paul's day were not confronted with this question. Instead of considering themselves obligated to have a part in civil government, they had an aversion to it. Since they considered that their accepting Jesus as Lord had removed them from the control of civil government and probably thought of it as being evil in its

origin, participating in its activities was unthinkable. And, further, because of their religious separation from both the Jews and the Gentiles as peoples by virtue of the unusual character of their teaching, it is highly unlikely that they had the opportunity for participation except through the paying of tribute or taxes. Since the New Testament writers seem to have had no occasion for discussing any obligations to civil government other than the paying of tribute and prayer, we search the New Testament in vain for any direct answer to our question that is in any wise comprehensive. Although such is lacking through the inspired records, certain facts relative to the function of civil government and the nature and work of each individual Christian, which have already been called to mind, provide us with a basis for a reasonable answer to the question. It is clear that civil rulers are God's ministers of vengeance and just as clear that Christians are God's ministers of peace who have been forbidden to take vengeance. Surely, any reasonable combination of these facts, through the process of thinking, that can make any claim to conform to the principle of logic must bring one to the inevitable conclusion that Christians cannot be civil rulers fulfilling the function of such a power, and at the same time faithfully fulfill their obligations as God's ministers of peace and comply with his instructions that they should not take vengeance.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 16

1. What has the expression "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" generally understood to mean?

2. What is the rest of Jesus' statement and what does it mean?
3. What must be considered to determine a correct understanding of our obligations to God and to civil government?
4. In this study what are some of the things that we have learned concerning our relationship to God that should be kept in mind?
5. The obligations of our relationship to civil government are obligations to whom?
6. What are our obligations to our fellowman that are demanded by our relationship to God?
7. Give the gist of the Christian's obligations to civil government as set forth in the New Testament.
8. What appear to be the probable conditions that called forth this teaching?
9. What reasons did Paul give to the Romans that they should obey civil powers?
10. What suggests that God does not direct all the details of civil government?
11. How did Paul show that civil government was to serve a divine purpose?
12. Why were Christians taught to pray for kings and those in authority?
13. Summarize the direct teaching of the New Testament on the Christian's relationship and obligations to civil government.
14. What misapplication have some people made of the teaching that we should obey civil government for conscience sake?
15. Give evidence from the lives of the apostles that they did not interpret it this way.
16. Show carefully how civil government is "a minister of God, an avenger of wrath" in the lives of Christians.
17. As we attempt to apply this teaching given to early Christians to the Christians of America today, what basic Christian teaching should we not forget?
18. In this matter of a Christian's relationship to civil government, what has not changed and what has changed?
19. What question relative to civil government confronts Christians of America today that did not confront them in Paul's day?

LESSON 17

RENDER UNTO CAESAR (Continued)

The next question that arises because of the wide variety of offices in our domestic form of government is, "Who are rulers?" Since Paul not only spoke of individual participants in civil government as "ministers of God's service attending continually upon this very thing," but also spoke of civil government as "the power" and declared, "he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath, to him that doeth evil," he thus spoke of the total function, and must have been referring to the total organization which included all that were party to the work. When this is applied to our present day set-up, it would certainly include all officers who are elected and empowered by the people, and all appointments under such for the purpose of carrying out governmental control. Putting the matter simply, this means that Christians, They That Are Christ's, should avoid all personal involvement in the functioning of civil government.

I know that this teaching will appear to be exceedingly strange to many people because like much other Bible teaching it has been sadly neglected; yes, completely overlooked by the majority of Bible teachers for the past forty years. This failure to teach what God has revealed on the subject, along with the exaggerated emphasis that has been given to form and to overt activity in religion

which has led so many religious people to overlook completely the Bible teaching that a Christian must be a new creature (one who partakes of the nature of God and not merely a person who performs certain religious acts) may cause some people to think this teaching unreasonable. For this reason, I give you this story hoping it will add clarity. This is the experience of a friend of mine which he personally related to me, and which I am writing from memory.

Several years ago in one of the cities of a North Central state, the preachers who were members of the Preachers' Alliance began to complain against the civil authorities for their failure to clean up certain crime conditions in the area. Their criticism became so irritating that the officials decided to give the preachers an opportunity to do what they had been accused of not trying to do, so all of the preachers of the section were summoned by the court to form a panel from which to select a grand jury. When they were all assembled in the courtroom the clerk of the court proceeded to administer the oath. He asked the preachers to stand, which they did, and ordered them to raise their right hands. On looking over the group he observed that my friend had not complied with the order. The clerk was irritated over the matter and indignantly shouted the question, "Can't you raise your right hand?" To which he received the calm, but courteous reply, "No sir." Then, without asking the reason why, the clerk commanded, "Raise your left hand." When this was not complied with, he shouted the question, "Can't you raise your left hand?" Again he

received the calm and courteous reply, "No sir." Confused and baffled, the clerk asked the judge what to do. On being instructed by the judge to ignore that case and administer his oath to the other men, the clerk did so, and the men were asked to resume their seats.

The court proceeded to examine these preachers for grand jury service. People had heard of this unusual occasion and the courtroom was filled with spectators. One by one the preachers were examined. All who had taken the oath were examined first. This had taken quite a period of time. The curiosity of the spectators had subsided and the courtroom was virtually empty. When my friend was called to the stand, the judge addressed him in a sober and respectful tone of voice, and recalling the fact that he had refused to take the oath of the court, asked him please to explain his action. In response to the judge's request and with the humble bearing of a servant of God, he said: "Judge, you are a minister of God and I am a minister of God. You are a minister of God unto vengeance. I am a minister of God unto peace. The people who accept my ministry will not come into your court, but those who reject my ministry and come into your court are your responsibility." The judge courteously addressed him again and stated, "I understand your position. You will never be called into my court again."

I have omitted the name of this person because I have no desire to use the weight of his Bible scholarship in support of this Bible teaching. It needs no such support. I have related the account to show that the position of

one who accepted the teaching was considered reasonable and was respected even by one who had undoubtedly thought of the matter quite differently for years. In fact, the logic of the teaching is so forceful that it cannot be misunderstood. The only way to avoid it is to ignore it. Any Christian who would justify his participation in civil government and at the same time hold to the Bible teaching is confronted with his very poignant question: "How can a person be God's minister of peace in the full meaning of the term and at the same time be God's minister of wrath or of vengeance?"

When the participation of a Christian in civil government is discussed, mention will often be made of certain activities in which some people cannot participate conscientiously. Someone will declare that he could not serve as a county sheriff lest it should become necessary for him to kill someone in self-defense, or lest it should become his duty to participate in an electrocution of a criminal. Another may state that he could not be a judge in criminal court lest it should become necessary for him to pronounce the death penalty upon one tried in his court. Another may say that he could not conscientiously serve on a jury in a case where the decision might demand capital punishment. However, these same people will help to elect and to empower the sheriff to shoot his fellow man or to close the switch at the electric chair. He will help to elect the judge or the man who appoints the judge with the power to pronounce the death sentence, or he is willing in many cases to have a jury composed of twelve of his fellows return the de-

cision of "guilty" when it demands death in the electric chair—all without the slightest feeling of responsibility for what happens. This is indeed a strange type of thinking, or is it a lack of thinking? Is it not strange that Christians can feel perfectly innocent in having other people do for them what they could not conscientiously do? Did you ever stop to consider what it means when we say that we live under a representative form of government? What can it mean if it does not mean that the functions carried out by the offices represent the people who impowered and who control the offices? If you join in the system by which these offices are controlled, then they are acting for you. When the jury returns the verdict of "guilty," it is acting for you. When the judge pronounces the death sentence he is speaking for you. When the sheriff closes the switch at the electric chair, he is doing so for you, if you are participating in the civil system of control.

There are many people today who call themselves Christians who not only say that it is right for Christians to vote as well as to participate otherwise in the activities of government, but they insist that it is the Christian's duty to vote. This dictum is supported only by a defensive type of human reasoning commonly known as rationalization. Rationalization is reasoning that is used to justify what one has already done or already planned to do or to support ideas that one has already accepted or whose mental state demands their acceptance. Instead of arriving at a conclusion through the best evaluation of all the facts pertinent in the case, the conclusion is born

of necessity and in turn determines the selection of the facts considered or distorts the evaluation assigned them to make them support the conclusion. Surely the result of such reasoning is not to be trusted. That which is offered in support of the contention that it is the Christian's duty to participate in civil government (and also used by many others to justify Christian participation), is the "supposed" demand of the governmental situation. It is frequently expressed in question form, "If all of the good people quit voting and holding office, what kind of a government would we have?" This question is used to imply that certainly if Christians cease to participate in civil government, it will go from bad to worse. Thus by focusing the attention on what is considered the demand of the situation, many of the facts have been overlooked, ignored, or neutralized; and while this is the demand that is expressed, there are often other demands that are more potent with some people than this one. They may be designated by the terms, "social," and, "personal." There are some people who seek to be elected to offices, or who join others to elect friends to offices, because of a craving for social prestige. There are others who become actively interested in elections and vote because it is the popular thing to do and looked upon favorably by their immediate circle of friends. There are still others whose demand springs from personal self-seeking. It is effective in both office holding and voting. It includes the majority of our office holders as well as those who hope to secure appointments through office holders.

But let us consider some of the facts that this conclusion has ignored. In the first place, the wording of the question itself implies a false assumption. Christians are not all of the good people in our country, as the word, "good," is used in this question; and, unfortunately, all of the people who call themselves Christians are not good. This is simply saying that the line that divides our population into the two classes, Christian and non-Christian, is not the line of demarcation between the good and the bad among our citizenship.

A second false assumption implied in the question is that law and officer make up the controlling influence in a democracy, which implies that people who do not participate in civil government have surrendered their opportunity to aid in the problem of civic control. This ignores a basic truth relative to the problem of human control that is recognized by all thinking people, and to which the experiences of our own government have repeatedly borne testimony. It is the truth that the control of a people rests in its education, not in laws and law enforcement. In fact, laws that do not represent the convictions of more than seventy-five per cent of the people whom they are to govern are virtually worthless. This was demonstrated in our attempt to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. Those who were in favor of such united in their efforts through church organizations and otherwise and sufficiently established the idea that such a prohibition was needed, so that a law to prohibit it was passed in the strongest and most comprehensive form, an amendment to our national

Constitution. This was accomplished in 1919. Somehow when that amendment was enacted, the people who were interested in the matter assumed that their victory had been won, and, putting their trust in the law, they discontinued their efforts to teach the people the evils of alcoholic drinks. Evidently those who were against such a law took advantage of the situation and began to indoctrinate the people to the contrary. Within the short period of fourteen years, they succeeded in removing the amendment to the Constitution by the same procedure by which it was added. It should be stated further that the virtually complete failure to enforce the law while it was in effect was due to the fact that there were still too many people who were not in favor of it. This was also the greatest fact in leading the American people to reverse their decision. Such a case should leave no doubt that the power of the law rests in the conviction of the people and not in the constitutionality of the statute. The conviction of the people is the result of values established through education.

May I call to your attention one other illustration of the great truth that our nation is controlled by ideas and not by laws and law enforcement? It is with apology, regret, and a certain degree of embarrassment that I find it necessary in this case to speak disparagingly of so many people. The case to which I refer is the present state of governmental control, or lack of control, that exists today throughout the length and breadth of our country. Before going into detail, may I remind you that we have all of the laws for controlling human be-

havior that we had fifty years ago, and many others in addition; also that we have all of the machinery for law enforcement that we had fifty years ago, with full expansion comparable to our national growth, and modernized equipment comparable to the progress in other fields; but our progress in human control has gone into reverse. Not only has our crime increased by leaps and bounds, but the ugly practices that are degrading to our society though not classed as crime, such as extra-marital sex indulgence, has increased beyond the reasonable stretch of the imagination.

Many have criticized, censured, condemned, and otherwise verbally abused the young people of today. In reality they are to be pitied. They are victims of circumstances. They have been betrayed by people who should have known better. Not only have they been robbed of the education that would have made them citizens fully as acceptable to society as the people of earlier generations, but they have been given an education that has made them what they are. They have been given the wrong ideas instead of the right ideas, a false sense of values instead of the true sense of values, destructive attitudes instead of helpful attitudes, which in many cases have become self-destructive. Who did it? All who have had a part in their education or training.

When we look at the complete picture it is evident that the increase in our crime and disorder is not the result of defective laws or a discontinuance of law enforcement, but rather of the failure of the education of our youth. This certainly makes it reasonable to consider

that those who are Christians, they that are Christ's, filled with his teaching and imbued with his Spirit, can contribute far more to the governmental control of their fellows through living and teaching Christianity than through participating in the externals of forceful control, and surely there are no grounds for charging one who is exerting such an influence with the failure of meeting his civic obligations. And furthermore, why should he gamble with the matter? Why should he risk the loss of a stronger influence in an effort to exercise a power which is much less effective, and why should he risk his own soul in the matter? Why should one who has pledged himself to serve God in the Spirit of holiness deliberately, but unnecessarily, seek an office in civil government which is fraught with temptations and dangers not to be found elsewhere? It is very evident that such a service has never made a person more spiritual, and it is rather apparent that few people who have served in public office have been as well off spiritually at the close of their term of service as they were before they sought the opportunity. There are few but have lowered their standards of behavior and have done things that were displeasing in the sight of God and damaging to their influence among men.

In the third place, the reasoning that Christians should participate in civil government in order to make it effective completely overlooks the lesson which was so forcibly taught to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It was first declared unto him by Daniel in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about a tree; and twelve

months later, when Nebuchadnezzar was gloating over his greatness in his kingdom, we are told: "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee: and thou shalt be driven from men; and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen; and seven times shall pass over thee; until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:31-32). Also when Daniel was called by Belshazzar to interpret the handwriting upon the wall, Daniel reminded him of the experience of his father when he was taught "that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will," and added, "And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven" (Dan. 5:21-23). One might say that this applied to Babylon only, but this could hardly be true for God had a hand in the internal affairs of Egypt (Rom. 9:17), and also of Syria (I Kings 19:15, II Kings 8:9,15). Or one might contend that this was only in the days of Israel and among the kingdoms through which God blessed or chastised Israel, his people, but that he has nothing to do with the governments of men anymore. This seems to be the popular idea, but what evidence do we have that it is the case and why would God have overruled such things for the benefit of Israel, which was for the most part a wicked rebellious, idolatrous people, and not

do as much for his people today who have been ransomed by the blood of his only begotten son; a people to whom his inspired apostle has 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); and to whom it has been plainly avowed that the civil power "is a minister of God to thee for good," and that "he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." Is it reasonable to consider that God has no control over his minister, and although it appears that the people of America are controlling the government of America, is it not true that God's control over the nations of the past appeared to be through the result of natural or human influences? Yes, there is every reason to believe that "the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men and that he setteth over it whomsoever he will."

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 17

1. Who are included in the "rulers"?
2. What may cause some people to think this teaching unreasonable?
3. What question confronts the Christian who participates in civil government?
4. What reason do some Christians give that they could not serve as sheriff or judge?
5. Under what conditions are these officers acting for you?
6. Describe the reasoning that is used to support the idea that it is the Christian's duty to vote.
7. What is the rationalization that is commonly used to support the idea?

8. Give two false assumptions that are implied in the question used to set forth the idea.
9. What is the real control of people in a democracy?
10. Give two illustrations to support this answer.
11. What is responsible for the condition found among our teenagers today?
12. What is not and what is the increase in our crime the result of?
13. How can they that are Christ's contribute far more to governmental control than through participation in government? Why?
14. What lesson from the book of Daniel have people overlooked who insist that Christians participate in civil government?
15. Why is there good reason to believe that the lesson still applies today?

LESSON 18

RENDER UNTO CAESAR (Continued)

In further support of the idea that Christians should vote, some have urged that they must do what they can with what they have before or while calling upon God for help. And in support of their plea they quote the sayings, "God helps those who help themselves," and "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." These sayings appear to be sound within themselves, but the application made of them in this case is unsound. In the first place it implies that voting is the only way or the best way that a Christian can aid his government. This has already been shown to be basically false. In the second place, it ignores the fact that a Christian must employ only the means that meet with God's approval. In the third place, it exaggerates the power or value of a vote in the matter of governmental control. A Christian's vote for the right may be cancelled by anyone's vote for the wrong, regardless of whether it was cast in ignorance or through the influence of evil or through political connivance; and, furthermore, in the very nature of our political machinery with the competitive influence of political parties, the limited and distorted information in regard to candidates often leaves the voter with little more than a guess as to which is the best candidate; or the candi-

dates may be such that in reality it would not matter which was elected. Yes, it is true that God helps those who help themselves; but we must remember that our efforts are to be made in keeping with God's revelation and consistent with the Christian's nature and mission.

Probably one of the most frequent questions raised in regard to the Christian's relationship to civil government concerns his obligations relative to carnal warfare. It is often worded thus: "What part can a Christian take in carnal warfare?" This question was never discussed by any of the New Testament writers. Consequently, it is not surprising that the answers given to it today by Christian people vary widely. The most common answer given is that he can take any part assigned to him by his government. With decreasing frequency, these answers are also given: "He can do any kind of non-combatant service." "He can do ambulance and medical service." And occasionally we hear the answer, "He can take no part whatsoever." Those who give the first answer commonly justify it by the reasoning that the Bible teaches them to be subject to the powers that be, and since the government gives the orders it is the government's responsibility. Others raise the question, "But how can a Christian kill when the Bible teaches 'Thou shalt not kill'?" In reply to this the fact is pointed out that God's people of old, Israel, who also had this teaching frequently took part in carnal warfare. The discussion generally stops at this point, but occasionally the objector is well enough acquainted with Bible knowledge to point out the facts that those people also practiced polygamy,

divorce, and a number of other things that are not permissible today, also that Israel was a nation and was forced to meet its own national problems.

Another rationalization, sometimes used by parents whose children participate in carnal warfare, is, "My boy is no better than my neighbor's boy," implying that he should aid in the dangerous and the unchristian task. If the statement is true the conclusion is correct. If, however, the boy is a Christian the statement is not true. His relationship is different and he is different. If he is no better, then he should be ashamed to claim to be a child of God.

Those who hold that a Christian can do non-combatant service but nothing more, find their consolation in the fact that they are not violating the letter of the law. But those who do the shooting contend that "The man who pulls the trigger is no more guilty than the one who brings him the gun and the ammunition." And for further justification they add, "The one who pulls the trigger is no more guilty than those who pay the taxes providing the money to buy the gun and the ammunition." If this were true, his case would be complete, but this is not true. As we have seen Christians are taught to pay their taxes to support God's minister of wrath. They are not responsible for the use made of the tax money. The government is God's minister of wrath, not their minister of wrath, and they are taught not to take vengeance. It is true that when a war is being waged Christians may very well know that a large part of their taxes will be used to buy the guns and ammunition, but

this does not make them a party to the matter any more than the fact that tax money is used to carry out execution of criminals makes them a party to that. Under the circumstances, those who furnish the money through their taxes are not guilty, but those who make the decisions to use the money are responsible.

Some Christians who refuse to use arms and who are unwilling to take part in some forms of non-combatant service will serve with the army in ambulance or hospital work. They seem to justify their participation with the thinking that theirs is the errand of mercy, that they are saving life instead of destroying life. As long as one views the matter from this narrowed and distorted perspective the service appears to be Christlike in character and fully justified; but when one broadens the perspective to see this activity in its relationship to the total picture, it takes on quite a different aspect. The people who are rendering these services make up a regular division of the armed forces and make their definite contribution to the success of the military campaign. It is true that they minister to those who are suffering, many of whom never return to the battle line; but many of them do return to battle. This means that at least in part they constitute an army repair unit. They aid in repairing the soldiers that they may return to service, just as the mechanic repairs the gun that it may return to service. Therefore, they share in the effectiveness of the army and also in the responsibility for what it accomplishes.

We have seen that all those who participate in army

activity, whether in actual combat or in some non-combatant service regardless of what sort, are contributing to the success of the fighting forces. Consequently, they share not only in the victory or the defeat, but in the responsibility for the destruction of human life. What about those who refuse to have any part in carnal warfare? Are they clear of all responsibility for such? The answer to this question appears to depend upon whether the civil government under which they live is God's minister of wrath or their minister of wrath; whether they have left the matter to God's overruling hand of providence or have taken it into their own hands, accepting the personal responsibility for the decisions made and the activities pursued. If they have become active in the system of human control by participation in civil power, then the government represents them, the military efforts represent them, the destruction of human life is for them. That is, the government is acting as their agent. Thus the case of one who refuses to participate in carnal warfare is like that of the person who refuses to serve on the jury in the case of capital punishment. He refuses to participate in the activity personally but participates in it representatively. He occupies a most awkward position. He has accepted a relationship the obligations of which his conscience will not permit him to fulfil; consequently, he becomes a pacifist, opposing the use of military power and also declares himself opposed to the use of capital punishment. If his conscience were followed by the civil power, it would be incapacitated to function as God's minister of vengeance. The

fact that God authorized the use of capital punishment by the Jewish people and commanded them as a people to engage in carnal warfare not only indicates the necessity but justifies these methods of civil or national control. There are many people today who oppose the use of capital punishment for criminals. This is a result of their failure to understand the function of civil government. It is God's minister of vengeance.

There are several things that make this difficult to understand. First, this is a Bible teaching which virtually has been discarded. Second, for the most part Christianity has been taught as a form of religion through which one might be saved; and accepting the gospel, becoming a Christian, has been thought of and spoken of principally as a matter of becoming a member of the church instead of being recognized as an entrance into a new relationship, the obligations of which were to take priority over all others. Third, the confession of Jesus as the Christ has been taught, discussed, and thought of as a profession of faith which must be complied with by everyone who would hope to be confessed before God at the judgment instead of being understood as an oath of allegiance, as a vow of faithfulness, as a pledge to accept Jesus as Lord allowing him to rule in one's life without reservation. Fourth, the Christian relationship has been stressed as the church relationship with practically no mention of it as a kingdom relationship. Much has been said about getting into the church of Christ but little about being translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). A great deal has been said about being

members of the church of Christ but virtually, nothing about being citizens in the kingdom of Christ (Eph. 2:19, Phil. 3:20).

In view of this mutilation of Bible teaching through deletion and distortion of emphasis, along with the failure to teach that they that are Christ's must be a consecrated and dedicated people, it is not at all surprising that our thinking relative to the Christian relationship and its sacred demands upon everyone that enters into it has become loose and ineffective. When Christians become blinded to the fact, or for any reason fail to come to the full realization of the fact, that their relationship to God and Christ is their supreme relationship, forbidding all others which in any way disrespect or dishonor it, demanding faithfulness in all rightful relationships and nullifying all obligations that in any wise conflict with one's obligations to God, they easily become victims of human thinking and find justification in the commonly accepted rationalizations. On the other hand, those who have been truly redeemed, purified, sanctified, and reconciled to God will not permit the obligation to any other friend to come first, nor will he allow any obligation to his human family to interfere with his obligations in the divine family, the family of God. Neither will he accept work or employment that hinders his being a true servant of Jesus his Lord, nor will he forget that his citizenship is in the kingdom of God; and his efforts will be for the success and glorification of that kingdom.

There is not an exact parallel, but there is a striking similarity between the relationship to the civil govern-

ment of a Christian who is a citizen of the United States and that of a person who is a citizen of a foreign country but living in the United States. The foreigner's allegiance is to his home country, but he must abide by the laws in the country in which he lives and pay the taxes required of him by law, although he cannot vote, hold office, or take part in military activities. The Christian who was a citizen of the United States before becoming such has declared his allegiance to another kingdom; and, although he is living in the United States, his first concern is for the kingdom of God and his energies will be given to helping maintain the proper conditions in that kingdom, giving special aid to the citizens in that kingdom, and seeking to expand its borders. It has been plainly revealed to him through his king that he must obey the laws of the United States as long as they conflict in no way with his obligations to God, and must pay taxes to support the civil power that it may accomplish the work for which it was ordained.

When he has done this, he has no further obligation to civil government. He has rendered unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's, and why should he want to do more? Why should he want to "run" the affairs in the temporal kingdom in which he lives? Why would a Christian, one who has dedicated his life to the ministry of peace, desire to share in the ministry of vengeance? Why should he want to do the dirty work for which God has provided the civil government as a substitute?

Today, much concern is being expressed by some peo-

ple over the danger of the loss of religious freedom in the United States by the gradual subjugation of the church to the state, and there is reason for concern. There is another change in this same general area, however, that is even more dangerous than the union of church and state that has received little or no consideration. It is the fusion of Christianity and civil government. The union of church and state will certainly become highly detrimental to the church, but the fusion of Christianity and government is already becoming very detrimental to both. Because of ignorance of the nature of Christianity, Christians are allowing themselves to be led or to be forced into situations that not only stifle their spiritual growth but also pressure them into doing things that are not only unchristian in character but also defiling in the sight of God.

Any Christian who proposes to share the responsibilities of civil government has thoughtlessly accepted a role that is unbearably inconsistent with his life as a Christian. He is attempting to be God's minister of vengeance and God's minister of peace at the same time. In this effort if he fails to acquire a dual personality that is capable of shifting from a minister of vengeance to a minister of peace, he fails to fulfill his Christian obligations, and if he fails to shift from a minister of peace to a minister of vengeance, his conscience cries out against the more violent acts of vengeance (war or capital punishment) especially if he is called upon to take an active part or is made to feel responsible in any way. Consequently, his Christian view of government functions makes him a

pacifist regardless of the international problems and causes him to oppose capital punishment in spite of the shocking increase in crime that is destructive to society. And so the failure of Christians who take part in civil government to develop dual personalities is disqualifying civil government for its divinely assigned task as a minister of vengeance and also disqualifying themselves for their Christian work as ministers of peace. If they succeed in becoming dual personalities, they become spiritual as well as human abnormalities living by a double standard and perverting their very nature.

May God grant those who would be his people the wisdom to understand that They That Are Christ's are not Christ's just because they do certain things but because they are a certain kind of people; because they have been redeemed, purified, sanctified, and reconciled to God; because they are led by his Spirit and partake of his nature; because they are people who have truly accepted Jesus as their Lord and find joy in doing what he wants them to do. May God grant those who would be his people the humility to recognize their ignorance, their human weaknesses, and consequently their besetting dangers of being blinded by the God of this world. May we become vividly aware of our need to heed the warning, "Be not deceived; evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Cor. 15:33) and "Awake to soberness righteously" (I Cor. 15:34), realizing that if one is going to keep himself unspotted from the world he must avoid those situations that pose a threat to his purity of life.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 18

1. What is used by some as further support of the idea that Christians should vote?
2. Point out the weaknesses in such.
3. A Christian's effort must be in keeping with what and consistent with what?
4. What are some of the answers given to the question "What part can a Christian take in carnal warfare?"
5. What are the justifications for some of the answers given?
6. What objections have been raised to the answers?
7. What determines whether or not the one who refuses to participate in any wise in carnal warfare still shares in the responsibility?
8. Show the awkwardness of one's position who refuses to participate in war but participates in civil government?
9. What things have made this teaching difficult to understand?
10. What causes Christians easily to become victims of human thinking and find justification in the commonly accepted rationalizations on this subject?
11. Who will not fall under these influences?
12. What illustration is used to show where the Christian's allegiance belongs?
13. What change that is taking place in our country is more dangerous than the union of church and state? Why?
14. What do They That Are Christ's need to understand?

AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Reader:

If you have not taken Jesus to be your personal Savior, I hope your reading of the foregoing lessons has made clear the fact that this is just what you must do if you would inherit eternal life. I hope it is evident that if you would be Christ's you must accept him as your Lord and that he must live in you and rule your life.

If you have accepted the gospel and claim to be Christ's, I hope these lessons have made you fully aware of the fact that this is your supreme relationship, the one to which all others must be made subservient, the one in which you must be led by the Spirit of Christ. I hope you have been made to realize more than ever before that if you are Christ's you have been redeemed from your former manner of life which was patterned after the ways of men, that you have been purified in your obedience to the truth, that you have been sanctified to the service of God, and that truly you have been reconciled to God having the attitude of a true friend.

May you also recognize the fact that if these changes have been accomplished in you, you are carefully and prayerfully avoiding all relationships that would hinder your faithfulness to your relationship to Christ and to those who are Christ's; that you are earnestly striving to keep yourself pure and to show forth the excellencies of Christ; that in brotherly love you are not only seeking to help other Christians maintain the same purity of life

but also to provoke them unto love and good works that in Christian unity we may be the light of the world.

May you know assuredly, unequivocally, and unquestionably that if you do not have the Spirit of Christ sufficiently to be making an honest effort to live in the way described above you have failed to be redeemed, purified, sanctified, and reconciled to God or you have fallen from that holy estate. If either is the case for the sake of decency, for the sake of your own soul, and for the sake of God's glory, rededicate yourself to true Christian living or quit claiming to be what you know you are not. Christianity does not require perfection, but it does demand an honest effort. To fail to try is a sure way to fail.

In sincerity and humility,

J. Ridley Strop

