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### An Examination of the Ethical Injunctions of St Paul

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE ETHICAL INJUNCTIONS  
OF ST. PAUL

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A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of New Testament Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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By  
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April 1948

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## INTRODUCTION

The ethics of St. Paul have been treated from many different viewpoints. Some theologians and philosophers have attempted to show that the writings of St. Paul contain only a rudimentary ethical system. Others have written to prove that he presents a systematically developed ethical code. Some have argued that St. Paul's ethics are only for anchorites; others have argued that they are intensely activist. Many writers in the twentieth century have attempted to evaluate St. Paul's ethics for the church of the modern world and for the modern world itself. Learned men have wondered aloud whether the church was losing the power of Paul's social message by insisting on spirit-killing over-codification of his moral remarks.<sup>1</sup> Others, equally learned, have urged that the specific injunctions of St. Paul be rejected entirely.

To these viewpoints, this paper does not profess to make further additions. Its only purpose is to highlight the ethical portions in the writings of Paul.<sup>2</sup> It will do this by emphasizing three aspects which have perhaps not received proper stress in many books which discuss this subject. These three aspects will be discussed under the general heading of the new three-fold relationship in which the converted individual finds himself.

In the first place, there is the relation of the individual to

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Kraemer's, Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, pp. 64, 97ff.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews will not be included in this discussion.

God and to Christ. Theologians discuss this item when they speak of the proper relation between sanctification and justification. Not much will be said on this vitally important question in this paper. It has been treated thoroughly and comprehensively in several works, notably in The Quest for Holiness.<sup>3</sup> I must discuss this relationship, however, in order to establish the only valid and correct orientation for the presentation that follows.

The second phase in the ethical life of the converted individual is his relation to his fellow-Christians. The stress will be placed on the individual as a member of "the body of Christ." In this chapter we shall concern ourselves with the motivations for Christian ethical behavior, and then with the specific injunctions which Paul states.

The third aspect of the individual's moral life is his relationship to the non-Christian world. St. Paul has much to say about this as, for example, in 1 Cor. 10: 24, 31, 33. "Let (everyone) seek...the good of his neighbor...to the glory of God...that they (the neighbor) may be saved."<sup>4</sup> And again in 2 Corinthians 3: "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men."

Then in the final chapter, the observations of the paper will be summarized. The underlying motives will be emphasized again.

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<sup>3</sup> Koberle, Adolf, "The Quest for Holiness."

<sup>4</sup> The translation, unless otherwise indicated, is that of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament.

## CHAPTER I

### OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A good starting point for the discussion of our relationship with God is A. L. Graebner's definition of sanctification or renovation as "the restitution of the divine image in the regenerate."<sup>1</sup> Sanctification is both a sudden and a gradual process. The change from the state of not being sanctified to being sanctified is sudden. The advance and growth therein is gradual. In a moment man is changed from a creature dead in trespasses and sin, at enmity with God, to a new creature, spiritually quickened, in whom God's love has begun to work. Then gradually this love assumes a more dominant role in his life, producing good works in ever greater degree, until final perfection is reached in heaven.

This is Paul's teaching. In the second chapter of Ephesians he says, "And you he made alive, when you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." We were dead! There is no such thing as a relative state of "deadness". All that we did while dead, all our works of darkness were unfruitful. (Eph. 5, 11). St. Paul describes our life in this state. "Among these we all once lived in

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<sup>1</sup> A. L. Graebner, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology, p. 196.

the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind."<sup>2</sup> In chapter one of Romans he gives a limited catalog of the sins of natural man: "They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless."<sup>3</sup> What a contrast there is between these actions of the natural man, characterized by selfishness, hatred and jealousy, and the actions of the children of God which we shall describe in the next two sections of this paper. Natural men are truly "sons of disobedience."

Not was there anything we could do to remedy this condition. All our efforts at quickening ourselves were in vain. God had to make us alive. And this he did "not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago."<sup>4</sup> Or as he expresses it in the second chapter of Ephesians, "...God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace are ye saved)."<sup>5</sup>

The thought progression of these first two pages is patterned

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<sup>2</sup> Eph. 2:3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 1:29-31.

<sup>4</sup> II Tim. 1:9. Cp. also Tit. 3:5.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. 2:4,5.

after that of St. Paul in the second chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. Verses 1-3 in this section speak of our former state, "dead through the trespasses and sins...following the desires of body and mind...and so were by nature children of wrath." In verses 4 and 5 Paul tells his readers what has been done for them. "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." Then in verses 6 to 10 the apostle points out the results of Christ's work.<sup>6</sup> God has "raised us up with him and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

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<sup>6</sup> Verse 6 has been interpreted in two ways. Meyer argues that the "raising up" must be taken in a literal sense as referring to the final resurrection. The apostle, in his opinion, regards the resurrection as complete for all believers because Christ has been raised. He views this passage as speaking of "objective" resurrection and adds that "subjective" resurrection will be accomplished in all the faithful. It seems that the majority of the commentators favor taking the "raising up" in a spiritual sense, referring it also to the new moral life upon which believers enter when they become united with Christ.

Those whom Meyer mentions as subscribing to this view are Flatt, Rükert, Meier, Matthies, Harless, Olshausen, de Wette, Baumgarten-Crusius, Schenkel, Hofmann, Bleek, (cp. p. 369), Calixtus, Rosenmüller, and Kuppe. (cp. p. 371). To this list might be added J. T. Mueller, in his Concordia New Testament; W. Arndt (compare C.T.M., Vol. VIII, p. 28); and Kennedy in the Expositors. It seems to the writer that the spiritual sense fits the context more easily. Kennedy explains verse 7 nicely in this way: "The satisfaction of His love was God's motive in quickening and raising them. The manifestation of His glory in its surpassing wealth is His final purpose in the same." (Expositors, Ephesians, p. 288.) Verse 10 would further seem to indicate that the apostle has in mind, to some extent at least, the results of Christ's work as they show themselves here in time. Cp. Meyer, Commentary on Ephesians, s.v.

It is significant to note that in this section which speaks of our new life, the phrase "in Christ Jesus" occurs three times; "with Christ", once; and "with him", once. The apostle does not say that he has made us to sit in the heavenly places "at his right hand."<sup>7</sup> No, this session, insofar as it begins in this life, is qualified and restricted very rigidly by the adverbial phrase. "This quickening, this resurrection, this seating of us with Him takes effect insofar as we are in Him as our Representative, having our life and our completeness in our Head."<sup>8</sup>

The idea of the fellowship of the believer with Christ, his Head, or with any member of the Trinity, is one of the important motifs in Paul's epistles. He develops it more fully in the second half of the second chapter of Ephesians. Although he is treating primarily of the new relationship between Jew and Gentile in Christ Jesus, what he says admits of universal application. "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it

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<sup>7</sup> Bengel apparently was the first to comment on this. He added, "Christo sua manet excellentia."

<sup>8</sup> Kennedy, Expositors, Ephesians, p. 288.

for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."<sup>9</sup>

The practical result of our fellowship with Christ is that we are lacking in no spiritual gift.<sup>10</sup> The fellowship union with Christ is an intimate one. Because of it we no longer live but Christ lives in us.<sup>11</sup> So intimate is the union that Paul frequently speaks of the believers as being members of the body of Christ.<sup>12</sup> He also illustrates this important concept by speaking of the believers as God's temple<sup>13</sup> and as God's field, God's building.<sup>14</sup>

As we proceed with this paper we shall see the significance of these passages in Paul's ethical system. These passages, of course, do not indicate that perfection in sanctification will be achieved in this life. We strive toward perfection. St. Paul speaks of this in his letter to the Ephesians: "And his gifts were that some should be apostles...for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the

<sup>9</sup> Eph. 2: 18-22. Note that in this passage all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned as participating in this union; the Spirit (v. 18); the Lord, that is, Christ (v. 19); and God (v. 19).

<sup>10</sup> I Cor. 1: 7. 9. Compare also Ch. 3: 21 and Rom. 8: 32.

<sup>11</sup> Gal. 2: 20.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 12: 4. 5; I Cor. 12: 12-27; Eph. 1: 23; 4: 12; 5: 23-30; Col. 1: 18; 2: 19.

<sup>13</sup> I Cor. 3: 16.

<sup>14</sup> I Cor. 3: 9.

unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."<sup>15</sup> This gradual growth in sanctification must be distinguished from justification, which takes place in a moment. Justification is a forensic and instantaneous act, requiring on our part only faith. Once the spark of faith has been enkindled by the Holy Ghost we are as fully and completely justified before God as we shall be even standing before His throne on Judgment Day. Sanctification, though, is a gradual process, a state in which we are expected to grow.

There is another difference. Justification is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Sanctification is an end in itself, and justification is the means to that end. Paul points this out: "...He died for all, that those who live might no longer live unto themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."<sup>16</sup> Or in Romans: "Do you know not that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life...We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him...So you also must consider yourselves

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<sup>15</sup> Eph. 4: 11-13.

<sup>16</sup> II Cor. 5:15.

dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."<sup>17</sup> When Christ died for us "His aim was to free us from the bondage of a worthless existence...The purpose of justification...is a life dedicated to Christ."<sup>18</sup> The Christmas epistle brings this out clearly. "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds."<sup>19</sup>

One of the grandest blessings of heaven consists in the fact that the divine image will be completely restored. Thus sanctification can be thought of as "a process, extending through the whole life of a Christian, remaining incomplete here on earth, but reaching its consummation when in heaven we shall be before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in his temple where we shall finally have attained and apprehended (cf Phil 3, 12f) because there we shall be like our Savior, for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>20</sup>

That is also why sanctification is spoken of as an end in itself.

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<sup>17</sup> Rom. 6: 3-11.

<sup>18</sup> Arndt, W., "Justification, Sanctification, and Stewardship", C. T. M., Vol. VIII, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Titus 2: 11-14.

<sup>20</sup> Arndt, W., op. cit., p. 35.

But sanctification of course can take place to no degree if justification has not taken place. As Luther points out: "When you see or hear something brave and honest in the world, then say, "Is Christ there, well and good; is Christ not there, then the devil surely is, though there be cap, cord, hair, shirt, virtue, respectability, etc. In the eyes of the World it may be piety, holiness, etc., but in God's eyes it's all an abomination if Christ is not there."<sup>21</sup>

He further clarifies the relationship between justification and sanctification in his Commentary on Galatians, when writing on Gal. 5, verse 6 he says: "Faith must of course be sincere. It must be a faith that performs good works through love. If faith lacks love it is not true faith...Idle faith is not justifying faith. In this terse manner Paul presents the whole life of a Christian. Inwardly it consists in faith toward God, outwardly in love towards our fellowmen."<sup>22</sup> Perhaps that last sentence may serve as a summary for the discussion of the relationship between sanctification and justification.

In the quotation from Dr. Arndt cited above we spoke of sanctification as "a process extending through the whole life of a Christian." It is by this process that the divine image is gradually restored, the perfect consummation being found in heaven. Or as Dr. Hoyer so aptly puts it: "The new man gradually reassumes the image of Him that created

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<sup>21</sup> Luther quoted by Hoyer, Theo., "Through Justification to Sanctification", C. T. M., vol XIII, p. 104.

<sup>22</sup> Luther, Martin, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, p. 204.

him, Col. 3, 10; all those divine traits begin to reappear which adorned the first human beings after the Creator had breathed into them the breath of life; more and more their life again assumes the form of life in Paradise, until their transformation on earth ends in their conformation in heaven to the likeness of their Father in heaven."<sup>23</sup>

It is true that in a moment we are justified before God. We are freed from the guilt and the curse of sin. But its dominion is not completely broken. The old man remains with the new man which we receive in the moment of conversion. This fact accounts for Paul's plaintive lament in the seventh chapter of Romans. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do...For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"<sup>24</sup> That sanctification is a struggle on our part is further indicated by St. Paul in such passages as these: "And those who have crucified the flesh with its passions

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<sup>23</sup> Hoyer, *Theo.*, op. cit., p. 77f.

<sup>24</sup> Rom. 17: 14-23.

and desires."<sup>25</sup> "Put off your old nature...and put on the new nature."<sup>26</sup> "Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."<sup>27</sup> And again, "...training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives..."<sup>28</sup> Perfecting this holiness "requires a constant struggle and yet flows spontaneously from the fountain of faith in the Savior."<sup>29</sup> "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us."<sup>30</sup> Again St. Paul summarizes the new life in the third chapter of Colossians. "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above....Put to death what is earthly in you...Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony....And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body....And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him....Whatever your

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<sup>25</sup> Gal. 5: 24.

<sup>26</sup> Eph. 4: 22-24.

<sup>27</sup> Rom. 13: 12.14.

<sup>28</sup> Titus 2: 12.

<sup>29</sup> Arndt, W., op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> Eph. 5, 1.2.

tasks, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men..."<sup>31</sup> This is the description of the moral and ethical life of the regenerate man. The contrast between it and the life of the unregenerate as described by St. Paul in the first chapter of Romans indicates the great power inherent in justification and sanctification, and the great distance we must travel to achieve our goal.<sup>32</sup>

This is the description of the attitude of the sanctified Christian. This is the man we shall follow as he meets his fellow Christians, and as he comes into contact with the children of this world.

In summary, we must repeat that this new man is not perfect. He is daily growing in sanctification, in fellowship and communion with Christ. But though this growth is slow and sanctified actions are often lacking, we must not forget that the Christian has been justified. All his actions are constrained by the love of God. (2 Cor. 5, 14). In the next two sections we shall see how this new life works in actual practice. We shall see how this new creature who "is the work of the Holy Ghost, who imbues our hearts with faith, love, and other Christian virtues,"<sup>33</sup> conducts himself in the world of the Church and in the secular world.

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<sup>31</sup> Col. 3: 1-23.

<sup>32</sup> See above p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Luther, Martin, op. cit., p. 250.

## CHAPTER II

### MY RELATIONSHIP TO MY FELLOW-CHRISTIAN

In Chapter I we remarked that "sanctification consists in the restoration of the divine image." We pointed out that restitution was a gradual process. We referred briefly to the second chapter of Ephesians in which Paul speaks of the change in the relationship which exists between God and the unconverted sinner and that which exists between God and the converted sinner. The fellowship existing between God and the individual believer is the source of sanctifying power. In Chapter II, using the fellowship between the believer and God as a basis, we shall discuss also the fellowship which exists among Christians.

Our fellowship with God works two ways. In relation to Him we are the recipients. He pours out upon us His love in unstinting measure. He brings us ever more closely into fellowship with Him. We are passive. But in relation to the rest of the world, and particularly to Christians, we are active. Love goes forth from us to the fellow-believers. We pour forth our love upon them in varying degrees of effusiveness. Luther used the picture of a funnel to explain this two-fold working of fellowship. Into the wide end God pours His love abundantly. From the other end love goes forth from us to the neighbor. The funnel is a happy choice for illustration for by the nature of its construction it never gives forth in the measure in which it receives. Some amount of the liquid always piles up in the cone while the rest runs out the small opening. The Christian, as far as love is concerned, also works as a

funnel, with a greatly exaggerated cone and a very small tube. God's love and regenerating power enter the cone in great abundance.<sup>1</sup> But only a thin trickle emerges from the funnel. Growth in sanctification consists in enlarging the tube so that a constantly increasing portion of love runs through to our neighbor.

Paul nowhere defines the amount of love which must flow through us to the neighbor. Certainly he does not say that because of our human shortcomings only a thin trickle is expected. Rather he says Christians "are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous."<sup>2</sup> At the end of the resurrection chapter in I Corinthians he says that Christians are to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Again, he tells Titus that God's people are to be "zealous for good deeds."<sup>4</sup> They are to be "most eagerly desirous" for the opportunities to do good works.<sup>5</sup>

These are unequivocal words. God demands an abundance of good works. St. Paul also reminds his readers that their amount of good works will be taken into consideration by God on the day of Judgment.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Titus 3:6.

<sup>2</sup> I Tim. 6:18.

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. 15:58. Compare II Cor. 9:8.

<sup>4</sup> Titus 2:14.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Thayer, s.v. "zealous", p. 271.

<sup>6</sup> II Cor. 5:10.

How important it is that we abound in good works. Yet the same Paul who wrote these passages also confessed that he could not do the good works he desired to do.<sup>7</sup> That is the experience of all Christians. This inability to abound in good works has caused much doubt and despair in Christians, including such great heroes of the faith as Paul and Luther. This paucity of good works among the believers is neither to be excused nor to be condemned. But we should remember that sanctification is a gradual process. "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."<sup>8</sup> We who have been born again must fight against the constricting narrowness of our funnel. We shall not increase in good works while reclining on "flowery beds of ease." We must fight. St. Paul tells the Ephesians, "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."<sup>9</sup> As with any skill, good works become progressively easier as we exercise ourselves in them.

By way of more specific introduction to our discussion of the relationship among Christians, the picture of the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ* will

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<sup>7</sup> Rom. 7: 15. 19. 22. 23. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 4: 15.

<sup>9</sup> Eph. 4: 22 - 24.

be discussed in more detail. Paul is fond of this illustration,<sup>10</sup> using it in at least thirteen different sections and treating it in varying degrees of fullness. In the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians it receives its most comprehensive treatment. The entire chapter is devoted to spiritual gifts, concerning which he does not want his brethren to be uninformed. Beginning with verse 12 he discusses these gifts in relation to the harmonious life of a Christian congregation under the picture of the body of Christ.

The Church is the body, Christ is the head. An idea of Paul's conception of the closeness of the relationship between the head and the body can be gained when we consider the fact that, in verse 12, by metonymy, he uses the term "Christ" for the Church. "This substitution shows how realistic was Paul's conception of believers as subsisting 'in Christ', and raises the idea of Church-unity to its highest point; 'all the members are instinct with one personality.'"<sup>11</sup> At some length Paul emphasizes that all the members of the body have a specific function and were specifically designed for that function. All members work together in perfect harmony. It is impossible to imagine any part of the body disowning another part because it is weaker or more unseemly. To all parts of the body the head gives unity of control and direction so that no two members work at cross-purposes. This same picture

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<sup>10</sup> As may be seen by comparing the partial list of its occurrences given above on page 7.

<sup>11</sup> Findlay, G. G., I Corinthians in Expositors Greek New Testament, Vol. II, p. 890.

St. Paul applies to the Church, for we are the "body of Christ and individually members of it."<sup>12</sup> Perfect harmony should also reign among the members of this body. All of the many members have a specific function and are specially designed to perform that function. "God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues,"<sup>13</sup> executives, janitors, musicians, solicitors, comforters, and so forth. There are truly varieties of gifts and varieties of service and varieties of working, "but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."<sup>14</sup> Just as the head gives unity of control and direction to our physical body, so Christ, the head of His Church, gives unity of control and direction to His body, "for it is the nature of every head joined to a body to infuse into all its members life and feeling and activity."<sup>15</sup>

Love is the keynote of the relationship among the members of the body of Christ. Christian love has been defined as "the endeavor of a society of sentient beings to realise from good-will and benevolence, by surrender on the one part and appropriation on the other, some common

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<sup>12</sup> I Cor. 12: 27. Compare Rom. 12: 5.

<sup>13</sup> I Cor. 12: 28.

<sup>14</sup> I Cor. 12: 6.7.

<sup>15</sup> Luther, Martin, "The Papacy at Rome," Holman, Vol. I, p. 357.

ends."<sup>16</sup> This definition applies only to love within the Christian community. If it is a valid definition within this scope, to what a high place Christian love is then raised. There can be no higher end than that which Christians seek, the Kingdom of God. There can be no higher measure of love, good-will and benevolence than that manifested among Christians. There can be no more beautiful or joyful demonstration of "surrender on the one part and appropriation on the other" than that practiced in a Christian community as it pursues its high goal.

"Augustine has somewhere said that the only thing which effectually unites men is a common desire for the same ends. According as we share in this one great hope, we shall feel ourselves as brethren. (Cp. Rom. 15: 46)....From the 'hope of glory' common to all believers Paul passes at once to the duty of affectionate unanimity....The closer the believers are united with Christ, and the more profoundly they love their common Savior, the more kindly affectioned are they toward one another."<sup>17</sup>

Actually the general principles just remarked upon should solve all problems of Christian relationship. But that they were not completely effective, even in Paul's time, is evidenced by the number of specific<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Haering, F., Ethics, p. 131.

<sup>17</sup> Hardt, C. A., "Christian Fellowship", C. T. M. Vol. XVI, p. 436.

<sup>18</sup> At least 45 sections contain specific admonitions, ranging in length from one verse to entire chapters.

admonitions which Paul was forced to address to the various congregations. These admonitions can be grouped into four general classifications. Group one concerns itself specifically with the relationship of brother to brother; group two with harmony in the congregation; group three with the relationship between the pastor and the flock, and the fourth group includes all those relations not grouped in one of the first three divisions.

In speaking of the relations which are to exist among the brethren, Paul lays down a general principle as a guide for our conduct. "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God....not seeking your own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved."<sup>19</sup> As Chrysostom remarked on this passage: ἀπὸ τοῦ

προκειμένου ἐπὶ τὸν καθολικὸν ἐξήγαγε τὴν παραίνεσιν, ἕνα κάλλιστον ὅρον ἡμῖν δοῦσ, τὸ τὸν νεὸν διὰ πάντων δοξάζειν.<sup>20</sup>

The passage just quoted from I Corinthians summarizes a section in which Paul had discussed the question of the exercise of Christian liberty in relation to the weak brother. Everything, he concludes, should be done for the glory of God. This is not idle theory, but a very practical guide for our conduct. No greater glory can be given to God than that which a sanctified soul offers, both in this life and in heaven. St. Paul warns us to be careful lest our actions affect one of these souls adversely. "If your brother is being injured by what

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<sup>19</sup> I Cor. 10: 31. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Meyer, H., I Corinthians, p. 241.

you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died."<sup>21</sup> And again, "For if anyone sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died....Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall."<sup>22</sup> In all your behavior to the brethren, St. Paul summarizes, "let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."<sup>23</sup>

These two principles, namely that everything should be done to God's glory and that love for the neighbor should guide our actions, reinforce each other. Behind all the specific injunctions on eating or not eating meat, on observing days,<sup>24</sup> and so forth, are these dual basic principles. They contain the real power, the real motivation, for our behavior. The exigencies of life require that these laws be codified so that we may apply them more readily. The codes of law, however, are not the ideal form for the statement of Christian ethics. Ideally, the two principles should be all that is necessary for guiding our conduct.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rom. 14: 15.

<sup>22</sup> I Cor. 8: 10. 11. 13.

<sup>23</sup> I Cor. 10:24.

<sup>24</sup> Rom. 14: 5ff.

<sup>25</sup> Cp. Kraemer, H., The Christian Message in a Non-Christian world, p. 97ff.

The same holds true in the relationship with an erring brother. Behind all specific injunctions there is a basic principle. St. Paul clearly states the underlying principle. One of the reasons for disciplining an erring brother, for delivering his soul to Satan, is "for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."<sup>26</sup> His instructions to the Thessalonians on the treatment to be accorded an erring brother also emphasize the point that even though a person be very refractory, he is to be admonished as a brother. The motive behind the admonition should be a desire to save his soul. "If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."<sup>27</sup> How different is the spirit which characterizes such regard for the brother who has refused to obey the Christian rules from that which so often motivates our treatment of one who has fallen. Note, too, that Paul calls this man not a sinner, but a brother.<sup>28</sup>

But Paul does not advocate a weak church discipline in these passages. His aim was not to set up loose standards of membership in order that the early congregations might soon boast large memberships. For the man who has no desire to be a brother, who will not seek to conform to the laws of fellowship, though he may most earnestly desire the outward ties, Paul has harsh words. "As for the man who is factitious,

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<sup>26</sup> I Cor. 5: 5.

<sup>27</sup> II Thess. 3: 14. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Cp. Moffatt, James, II Thessalonians, Expositors, p. 53. Compare also II Thess. 3: 6.

after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful: he is self-condemned."<sup>29</sup> Speaking of these men who have no desire to promote the true interests of the brotherhood, St. Paul writes to the Romans, "I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have learned, avoid them."<sup>30</sup> The person who is himself motivated by the law of love, and who understands the true nature of the body of Christ, will have no difficulty in distinguishing between one who is deliberately factious a "belly-server", and the brother whom "sin has reached more rapidly than he could flee from it."<sup>31</sup> Of this erring brother, Luther says, "Pastors and ministers must, of course, rebuke the fallen, but when they see that the fallen are sorry they are to comfort them by excusing the fault as well as they can. As unyielding as the Holy Spirit is in the matter of maintaining and defending the doctrine of faith, so mild and merciful is He toward men for their sins as long as sinners repent."<sup>32</sup> This is the spirit with which any brother who is a member of the body of Christ is to be dealt with.

Group two does not, perhaps, logically constitute a separate group from the one just discussed. But the wealth of practical comfort

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<sup>29</sup> Titus 3: 10.

<sup>30</sup> Rom. 16: 17.

<sup>31</sup> Gal. 6: 1. See Meyer, Galatians, p. 247

<sup>32</sup> Luther, Martin, Commentary on Galatians, trans. by T. Graebner, p. 237.

and sermon material in the passages to be discussed entitle it to special treatment. This may well be called the "communion of saints" division, for it concerns itself with the brotherhood, including both the obligations and the privileges, and the wonderful benefits we receive from our membership in the communion of saints.

The members of the body of Christ have been called to a high calling; they are to walk worthy of that vocation.<sup>33</sup> When Christians walk according to their high vocation, they add to the glory of God and so their lives are in harmony with the τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ πάντων δοξάζουσα of I Cor. 10: 31.

Paul gives a general description of the truly worthy walk in the epistle to the Colossians. "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so that you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were called in the one body....And admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God, and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Compare Phil. 1: 27; Eph. 5: 8; Col. 1: 10; I Thess. 2: 12; II Thess. 1: 11.

<sup>34</sup> Col. 3: 12-17.

The primary requirement of the walk worthy of our vocation is the maintenance and preservation of unity in love. "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment."<sup>35</sup> The apostle emphasizes the importance of unity in the fourth chapter of Ephesians by the dramatic repetition of the word "one". "I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all."<sup>36</sup> This exhortation to maintain unity touches upon almost the whole category of human vices and virtues. "There can be no peace where there is pride and uncharitableness. Conceit, arrogance, egotism, and an unforgiving spirit must of necessity jeopardize, if not disrupt, unity. Humility, however, and meekness make for peace and harmony."<sup>37</sup>

Consideration for the brother is a further characteristic of the worthy walk. This aspect of the Christian relationship is stressed by Paul in many passages. In his epistles it is a very practical concept and a great aid to Christians in their endeavor to lead

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<sup>35</sup> I Cor. 1: 10.

<sup>36</sup> Eph. 4: 1-6. Compare also the earnestness of Paul's exhortations to unity in Phil. 2: 1, 2; Col. 2: 2, and Rom. 15: 5.

<sup>37</sup> Hardt, C. A., op. cit., p. 446.

God-pleasing lives. It seems today this idea has been relegated to a somewhat minor place. Perhaps pastors do not make enough use of the brotherly love and aid furnished by the communion of saints in their sermons or their counselling. They are depriving themselves and their parishioners of one of the greatest joys of the Christian religion and one of the most efficient and practical aids for a more Christian life.

As was mentioned above, Christian fellowship or *κοινωνία* is "give" as well as "take." What is true of our relation to God's love is also true of our relation to our fellow-Christians. We pour out God's love upon them and we receive God's love from them. In writing on *κοινωνία*, C. A. Hardt says, "Let us bear in mind that it is always used to describe a close and intimate relationship existing between two or more persons."<sup>38</sup> It is certainly not a matter of chance that this word is used by the sacred writers to denote the unique, sublime, intimate communion which exists between the Triune God and the sanctified believer, and, resulting from that, the intimate fellowship that unites one believer with another."<sup>39</sup>

Just as in the marriage relationship both parties are constantly and tenderly concerned about the welfare of each other, so also Christians are concerned about the welfare of fellow-members of the communion.

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<sup>38</sup> "It is worthy of note that *Koinonia*, like the verb, *koinoneo*, is used especially of the closest of all human relationships, e. g., the marriage contract." (Moulton and Milligan, p. 351, Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament.) Cp., Hardt, C. A., op. cit., p. 509.

<sup>39</sup> Hardt, C. A., op. cit., p. 509.

St. Paul makes repeated reference to this concern over the spiritual welfare of the brother.<sup>40</sup> He tells the Romans that "we who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves: let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him."<sup>41</sup> To the Galatians he writes, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."<sup>42</sup> In commenting on this last verse, Meyer has realized the full beauty and brilliance of one of the facets of the diamond which Christian *κοινωνία* is. "The mutual bearing of moral burdens is the mutual loving participation in another's feeling of guilt, a weeping with those that weep in a moral point of view, by means of which moral sympathy the pressure of the feeling of guilt is reciprocally lightened....Theodore of Mopsuestia ...well remarks that the bearing of one another's burdens takes place ...'whenever by advice and kindness you relieve his spirit, weighed down by the consciousness of sin.'<sup>43</sup> This command leaves no room for gossiping over the fallen brother or for a pharisaic satisfaction in our

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<sup>40</sup> Many of the passages which speak of the Christian's concern for the weaker brother are found in sections dealing with *adiaphora*. But in as much as they constitute a further development of the subject of Christian fellowship, they are treated here, rather than under the first group.

<sup>41</sup> Rom. 15: 1.

<sup>42</sup> Gal. 6: 1.2.

<sup>43</sup> Meyer, H., Galatians, p. 248. See especially footnote 9.

own righteousness. The practice of this injunction would lead to a fuller realization of the benefits we should receive as members of the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ*. It points to a frequently untapped source of strength for all Christians. Individually it is very difficult to lead the Christian life. Collectively it becomes much easier. Sin, borne alone, is a wracking pain which robs the sufferer of strength and joy. Sin, shared, is sin lessened; its effects are less destructive; its guilt is more quickly forgotten.

Two things are specially worthy of note in these injunctions. In writing to the Romans Paul urged consideration for the weaker brother so that he might be edified and strengthened. He desires to see the brother so built up in his spiritual nature that he may more easily resist all the onslaughts of the devil and may more easily persevere unto the end. Paul's motivation, in other words, is the first part of the dual basic principle which we have mentioned before. He wants the soul of the erring brother guarded and strengthened so that it may glorify God. In admonishing the Galatians he refers to the second half, namely that our actions should be guided by our love for our neighbor. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." With this mention of the thought of love for the neighbor a grand vista in Paul's writings is revealed to our eyes. The beauty of this concept inspired in Paul some of the greatest literature the world knows. The law of Christ — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" — is an idea of which Paul never tires. Constantly he returns to it in his

epistles.<sup>44</sup> Again and again he appeals to it for the final decision in practical matters. And Paul in no way limits the force of this love. He even compares our love for the neighbor with Christ's love for us. "And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."<sup>45</sup> If Christ loved us so deeply that He died for us, certainly there is no limit to the faults of the brother which we in love will overlook. Notice, too, how closely all that Paul has to say on love ties in with the Christian's consideration for the weaker brother.<sup>46</sup>

In his epistle to the Galatians St. Paul includes a remark on this law of Christ which is worthy of mention here. He says, "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"<sup>47</sup> The Galatians were much concerned over multifarious Mosaic ordinances and human superstitions. Paul chides them for this.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Compare Rom. 13: 9; Gal. 5: 14; I Thess. 4: 9; Eph. 1: 15; 5:2; Phil. 2: 2; Col. 1: 4; 2: 2; I Thess. 3: 12.

<sup>45</sup> Eph. 5: 2.

<sup>46</sup> Compare, for example, Eph. 4: 1. 2. "I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called....forbearing one another in love." On this passage Meyer quotes Calov: "Bear the infirmities of others with patience, and do not withdraw from his friendship because of those things in our neighbor that displease, but constantly love his person, even though we have his vices in hatred." Meyer, Ephesians, p. 437.

<sup>47</sup> Gal. 5: 14. Compare also Rom. 13: 8. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Gal. 3: 1.

He tells them that their concern is foolish. All Mosaic laws and all human and divine ordinances will be automatically kept if the law of Christ is kept.<sup>49</sup> In effect he says, "If, therefore, ye through love serve one another, the whole point in dispute is thereby solved; there can no longer be any discussion whether ye are bound to fulfil this or that precept or law,—ye have fulfilled the whole law."<sup>50</sup> And Luther says of this verse, "Theology the briefest and longest; the briefest, as to words and sentences, but in experience and fact wider, longer, deeper and higher than the whole world."<sup>51</sup> In one way we are like the Galatians. We concern ourselves overly much with specific commands and neglect the dynamic force which governs all individual injunctions. In our instruction classes we begin with the particular duties and behavior required of us by the specific commandments. As a result of this approach, the learners receive a very atomistic conception of Christian life. The power to lead this life is restricted by this approach to the commandments. It would be better to begin with the summation of Paul, which is the starting and culminating point, the incentive and the goal, of all parts of the law. Paul's idea amounts to "an implitio totius legis dilectione formata," a fulfillment of the whole law,

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<sup>49</sup> The radical nature of the law of love is emphasized by the quotation from Cicero which Meyer cites in this connection. "Nihilō sese plus quam alterum homo diligit." de Legg. 1, 12. Meyer, Galatians, p. 233.

<sup>50</sup> Meyer, H., Galatians, p. 232.

<sup>51</sup> Meyer, H., loc. cit.

energized by love."<sup>52</sup>

This love for the brother will also produce tangible results. The physical distress and suffering of the saints will at once call forth sympathy from the other saints and will result in great joy at this opportunity to do good to those that are of the household of faith. The churches of Macedonia have furnished us with a heart-warming example of the practical manifestation of Christ-motivated love. "We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."<sup>53</sup> Little can be added to these remarks, except perhaps what Paul says later in the chapter concerning the general relationship among the members of the body of Christ in relation to the material things of life. "I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want, that there may be equality,"<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Meyer, H., op. cit., p. 234

<sup>53</sup> II Cor. 8: 1-5.

<sup>54</sup> II Cor. 8: 13. 14.

We are today witnessing a manifestation of practical love for other members of the brotherhood in the amazing contributions which our church members are making to the support and care of their fellow-saints in Germany. He who fully appreciates the nature of brotherly love will regard this European drive not as an obligation, but as an opportunity for doing good to the brother.

The problem of the proper use of various spiritual gifts also falls under the head of harmony in the congregation. We need not concern ourselves at any great length with the special charismatic gifts which were found in the apostolic church. When discussing these special gifts the apostle establishes a very practical rule for evaluating them. For example, on the comparative value of prophecy and speaking in tongues, he has this to say, "Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified."<sup>55</sup> Later in the chapter he adds another standard of evaluation. "If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you."<sup>56</sup> In other words, by their prophesying

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<sup>55</sup> I Cor. 14: 5.

<sup>56</sup> I Cor. 14: 23-25.

intelligibly, a brother for whom Christ has died may be gained. So also in the use of these special gifts, the standard of evaluation is that the church may be built up and that God's glory may be achieved.

The apostle's discussion of the use of skills and aptitudes which individual believers possess for congregational work is treated in terms of the metaphor of the human body. "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them."<sup>57</sup> "Every member its gift, but it is limited by the fact that it is no more than a member; it is not the whole body."<sup>58</sup> The recent convert to Christianity would perhaps be inclined to say, "Ah, how wonderful it would be if only I had the gift of prophecy, teaching, or exhortation, so that I might in worthwhile manner show my gratitude to the Lord for the great gift He has given me." But Paul does not end his list with just the great gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues. He adds, "he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." And we

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<sup>57</sup> Rom. 12: 4-6. Compare also I Cor. 12: 12-26. In the Romans passage, "let us use them" is absent in the Greek. Dr. Denny feels that good sense can be made of the passage without supplying these words. "Now having gifts differing according to the grace given to us—as one may see by glancing at the various phenomena of church life—let us use them with humility (remembering that they are gifts) and with love (inasmuch as we are members one of another)." Denny, James, Romans, Expositors Greek New Testament, p. 690.

<sup>58</sup> Denny, James, op. cit., p. 689.

might add, "he who vacuum cleans the church carpets, with diligence; he who drives the school bus, with loving carefulness; he who makes good music, with joyful devotion; he who speaks of Christ to others, with love", and so forth. The list is endless. All of these gifts are given by the Spirit to specific individuals for the performance of special tasks, so that the body of Christ might develop and be strengthened. The Holy Ghost carefully assigns the gifts at given times and in given places to various individuals. Christians must give all diligence to the full exercise of them, with the Spirit's help,<sup>59</sup> in order that the body of Christ may achieve its maximum growth and strength. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."<sup>60</sup>

With the next group of injunctions, that concerning the position and decorum of women, we deal more particularly with specific injunctions devoted to specific abuses present in the church at the time in which Paul wrote. Although many of these situations no longer exist today, the principles which Paul lays down or which can be deduced, and his methods of expostulation are valuable for us today. His treatment of the question of women praying with uncovered head is particularly illustrative of these things.<sup>61</sup> In the first place, Paul demonstrates his

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<sup>59</sup> Compare Rom. 12: 1. "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

<sup>60</sup> I Cor. 12: 7. Compare especially Eph. 4: 16 for the R. S. V. translation, "common good."

<sup>61</sup> I Cor. 11: 2-16.

knowledge of human psychology. He begins this section of rather sharp rebuke with a word of praise. "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them unto you." Still Paul is not ready for the rebuke. Before he admonishes them, he gives them the principle upon which the admonition is to be based. "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." Through these first two verses of this section there shines a beautiful spirit of sincere love and care for those to be admonished. And by laying down the scriptural principle, St. Paul removes the whole matter from the field of personalities. Instead of being angered by Paul's rebuke, the Corinthians must have been grateful to him for his help in getting their lives back into harmony with God's plan.

What Paul has to say on the subject of women praying must be viewed in the light of the underlying principle. The progression of subordination which Paul lays down must still hold. Today God is still the head of Christ,<sup>62</sup> Christ of the man, and the husband of the wife. But customs in regard to covering and uncovering of the hair have changed somewhat. Paul's admonition on the use of veils sprang from a social custom prevalent among the people to whom he was writing.<sup>63</sup> A woman

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<sup>62</sup> Melancthon, cited by Meyer, says on this "subordinationism", "Deus est caput Christi, non de essentia dicitur, sed de ministeriis.... Fit his mentio non arcanæ essentiae, sed ministerii." I Corinthians, p. 247.

<sup>63</sup> See Meyer's discussion of this point. I Corinthians, p. 248.

who appeared unveiled in public stamped herself as a woman of doubtful reputation. This no longer holds true. No longer can the pastor lay down the rule that every woman who appears in church with uncovered head thereby stamps herself as a harlot. Paul himself indicates that the command on veiling is not on the same unchangeable basis with that of the subordination of the woman when he appeals to the voice of nature and custom to support his ruling on this particular point. Paul issued this injunction on veiling because he did not want any obstacles to be placed in the path of the Gospel's progress by a refusal on the part of Christians to conform to customs which in themselves were harmless.<sup>64</sup>

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul adds a few remarks on the proper dress and life of Christian women. "I desire...also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion."<sup>65</sup> This exhortation is but one of a series which began in the first verse of the chapter. After the first exhortation to prayer, Paul digresses for a moment to give the reason behind the exhortation. "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>66</sup> In verse five he continues his

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<sup>64</sup> Compare I Cor. 9: 12.

<sup>65</sup> I Tim. 2: 8-10.

<sup>66</sup> I Tim. 2: 3. 4.

exhortation to prayer, adding that men should pray "without anger or quarreling." Then with no transition thought he gives the advice for the behavior of women. Perhaps in the back of the apostle's mind was the thought that any other behavior on the part of women would offend outsiders and so render all the more difficult the task of saving all men and bringing them to the knowledge of the truth. In his letter to Titus, St. Paul does connect this thought directly with the admonition. "Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderous or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited."<sup>67</sup> He further broadens the base for this admonition by stating that the true adornment of the woman is to consist in good deeds. If the women realize that Christian living is most important, that a basket of food for a needy family is far more attractive in God's sight than a new hat, all temptation and inclination to this excessive external adornment will be removed.

Having concluded this phase of woman's decorum, St. Paul adds a further restriction on their behavior in no uncertain terms. "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men, she is to keep silent."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Titus 2: 3-5. See also v. 10 and I Tim. 6: 1. With these passages compare I Cor. 10: 31-33.

<sup>68</sup> I Tim. 2: 11. 12.

"As in all the churches of the saints the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."<sup>69</sup> These two passages are the sedes doctrinae for the conduct of women in the church assemblies. They deserve more detailed consideration. St. Paul is speaking only of public assemblies for worship. His remarks here do not apply to family devotion. There is no mistaking his meaning.<sup>70</sup> Women are to keep silence in the church. Paul bases this command on four fundamental arguments. The first is the subordination of woman which God has established in the very act of creation.<sup>71</sup> His second argument is based on the fact that the woman was first deceived, then Adam.<sup>72</sup> These two arguments are valid yet today. His third argument is based on that fact that it would be

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<sup>69</sup> I Cor. 14: 33-35.

<sup>70</sup> There is an apparent contradiction or exception to this rule in I Cor. 11: 5. At times women did speak or prophesy in the church. Meyer attempts to solve the contradiction by referring "church" not to the general assemblies, but to the ecclesiolae such as at times met in a member's house. Findlay in The Expositors Greek New Testament ignores the problem. More happy is the suggestion of Timothy Dwight, the American editor of this volume of Meyer's Commentary. "A possible exception is, perhaps, made in I Cor. xi, in case a woman was inspired by the gift of prophecy. Even then, however, she was to have a symbol of subordination on her head." Cp. his notes to I Timothy, p. 113.

<sup>71</sup> Compare I Tim. 2: 13. Also I Cor. 11: 8. 9.

<sup>72</sup> I Tim. 2: 14. Compare I Cor. 14: 34 with Gen. 3: 16.

"shameful for a woman to speak in the church."<sup>73</sup> Natural instinct rebels against the woman achieving a position of equality with men.<sup>74</sup> Inasmuch as the social custom stems from the first two arguments, this one also is valid. For his fourth argument in favor of woman's silence, St. Paul appeals to the general Christian usage. He points out that silence is enjoined in all the churches of the saints. At the conclusion of his remarks he bursts forth in rebuke of the Corinthian tendency to act "without thinking of any but themselves, as though they were the one church in the world, or might set the fashion to all the rest."<sup>75</sup> "What! did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?"<sup>76</sup>

Paul's injunctions on the position of women in the church assemblies have, of course, a bearing on the position of women teachers in the church. At no time are women to be permitted to teach the men in public gatherings. Nothing is said, however, against a woman teaching children, either her own or those of others. So the church violates no divine command by having female parochial school teachers or Sunday

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<sup>73</sup> I Cor. 14: 35.

<sup>74</sup> Findlay, G. G. "It shocks moral feeling." The Expositors Greek New Testament, I Corinthians, p. 915. Even the equality which woman has achieved today as a result of the expenditure of great effort on the part of a few leaders, is marked with contradictions and hesitations and is neither fought for determinedly nor used fully by the majority of women.

<sup>75</sup> Findlay, loc. cit.

<sup>76</sup> I Cor. 14: 36. This passage and thought is applicable to those churches in the various denominations which today insist on following their own customs and usages in certain fields of Christian life and worship.

But when the child becomes a man, he is no longer to be instructed in religion by women. Hence the custom in many churches of restricting women teachers to the lower age groups, and not permitting them to teach religion to classes of the confirmation age.

In the church of Paul's time, God created the new office of elder or bishop. St. Paul had to instruct both congregations and bishops as to their mutual duties and requirements. In his letters to Timothy and Titus he gives an exhaustive list of requirements for the persons who would serve as bishops. He wanted to make sure that no man would become a bishop or deacon who could not rule well the household of God, or who, by his conduct, would give offense to either Christians or outsiders. To Timothy he writes that "a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil; moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."<sup>77</sup> Paul required that in relation to his members, the bishop be hospitable, an apt teacher, a good manager, and one who holds firm to the sure word as he was taught.

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<sup>77</sup> I Tim. 3: 1-7 and Titus 1: 6-9. I Tim. 3: 8-13 gives the qualifications for the office of a deacon.

The question of financial support also entered into this relationship. Some of the congregations felt that for one reason or another, they were not bound to contribute to the support of the pastor. Paul speaks very bluntly to such congregations. "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain'....If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?"<sup>78</sup> We are entitled to decent wages on the grounds of both logic and the divine law, says the apostle. But he hastens to add, "Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel of Christ....But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this to secure any such provision."<sup>79</sup> Paul's primary concern was to preach the Gospel without in any way hindering or reducing its effectiveness. He was perfectly willing to support himself by making tents, if, among other reasons, the congregations were not yet spiritually old enough to realize that on them fell the obligation of supporting the pastor.

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<sup>78</sup> I Cor. 9: 7-11. Compare also Gal. 6: 6; I Tim. 5: 17,18. In the Galatians and I Timothy passage, "koinoneo" is used to encourage support of the pastor.

<sup>79</sup> I Cor. 9: 15.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul includes a beautiful bit of advice on how the members are to regard their pastors in general. "But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love because of their work."<sup>80</sup>

There are still several miscellaneous injunctions on which a few remarks should be made in concluding this chapter. On the question of litigation between Christians, Paul rebukes the Corinthians sharply for taking their cases before unbelieving magistrates.<sup>81</sup> He advances at least four reasons for this censure. In the first place, it is between members of the brotherhood, and certainly such a case can and should be decided within the brotherhood. No family desires to have a quarrel between father and mother appear on the docket of a civil judge. In the second place, Christians will some day judge the world, including even the angels. Are they, then, incompetent to settle the trivial matters of daily living? Further, it is a disgrace for the church to lay this matter before the unrighteous judges, "before those who are least esteemed by the Church."<sup>82</sup> In the fourth place, every lawsuit brought before unbelieving judges constitutes a "defeat" for the brotherhood,

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<sup>80</sup> I Thess. 5: 12. 13.

<sup>81</sup> I Cor. 6: 1-8.

<sup>82</sup> Findlay refers this verse (4) to Christians who are held in low esteem, and so are suitable to be placed on the bench as judges. (The Expositors Greek New Testament, I Corinthians). The great majority of commentators, including Luther, Calov, Olshausen and de Wette refer it to secular judges. Cp. Meyer, I Corinthians, p. 131.

for they are thereby set back in the eyes of the world for not having lived up to their theoretical excellencies.<sup>83</sup> Rather than hurt the church in any way and so fall short of their high calling, Paul urges them to suffer wrong and to be defrauded.

Another abuse of which the Corinthians were guilty was that of over-eating and -drinking in connection with the Lord's Supper.<sup>84</sup> Paul shows the Corinthians that this is contrary to Christ's institution and a sin against the law of love, for thereby the Church of God is brought into disrepute, and those who have nothing to eat are humiliated. Just in passing it can be noted once again that Paul does not arbitrarily state the law and then demand unquestioning obedience to it. But, as usual, he gives his readers several excellent reasons for ceasing to do the wrong thing of which they have been guilty.

In summary, we might repeat the principle which is to motivate and govern the Christian's conduct among his fellow-believers. The first half of this principle is that everything should be done to the glory of God. The greatest glory is given to God by the person who accepts Him and whose life is, as far as is humanly possible, in harmony with the Biblical injunctions on the God-pleasing life. The second half of the principle is the law of love, according to which we seek the temporal and eternal welfare of the neighbor in everything we do.

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<sup>83</sup> Meyer explains it as a defeat, because thereby they come "short of the Messianic salvation." p. 133.

<sup>84</sup> I Cor. 11: 20-22.

## CHAPTER III

### MY RELATIONSHIP TO MY NON-CHRISTIAN FELLOWMAN

In the preceding section of this paper we dealt with the fellowship a Christian has toward his fellow-Christian. We used the Pauline picture of the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ* to illustrate many of the remarks. In this chapter we shall discuss the relationship of Christians toward the various secular institutions of society, such as marriage and the family, government and slavery, and finally, the general topic of the Christian's attitude toward his unbelieving fellowmen. In Chapter II it was always possible to take for granted mutual, Christ-motivated love as a basis for ethical injunctions. In the relationship to be discussed in this chapter, this love can not be assumed as mutual. Often the motivation of Christ applies to only one part of the contact. But the basic principle, with some modifications, remains the same. For example, the preservation and maintenance of faith is not always the issue, but rather the creation of faith. The objective changes from strengthening and preserving the brother for whom Christ has died, to winning him. This subject of our relationship to the impersonal secular institutions of society is one which some churches have in the past been inclined to neglect. As society becomes more and more secular, the Church must restudy the problem of this relation.

In some of the fields to be discussed the relationship of the Christian and his fellowman rests on a very impersonal basis. There is,

for instance, the Christian's relationship to secular government.<sup>1</sup> But even here St. Paul bases his admonitions to the Christians on their relationship to God. He tells his readers that they are to be subject to every existing government because all have been instituted by God. Whoever "resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" rightfully in the form of punishment administered by the magistrates. Much has been written about the problem of resisting the authorities. The question of revolution against the established government has often troubled Christians. Luther argued on the basis of Romans that no revolution was justified. He could only advise those dissatisfied with the government to leave that country, if possible, or otherwise to endure misrule in silence. Meyer agrees with this view, stating that "the Christian, according to Paul is to regard any magistracy whatever, provided its rule over him subsists de facto, as divinely ordained, since it has not come into existence without the operation of God's will; and this applies also to tyrannical or usurped power, although such a power, in the counsel of God, is perhaps destined merely to be temporary and transitional."<sup>2</sup> This position presents many practical problems. How should we feel toward a government which abuses our personal rights and privileges? Paul says that every one should be subject to the higher power all the time. Certainly Paul had experienced abuse at the hands of the government to which he demands

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 13: 1-7. Compare also Titus 3: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, Romans, p. 489.

submission.<sup>3</sup> How are we to conduct ourselves in time of revolution? To which contesting power do we owe our loyalties? When does a revolutionary government become de facto the government of a country? No rules can be laid down to govern such a situation. Should such a condition arise, the Christian may find himself in a terrible dilemma. All he can do is resort to constant prayer and depend on the guidance of God. St. Paul does not touch on such contingencies. In his section on government only "normal circumstances are contemplated....cases of casuistry—involving doubtful, contested, usurped, and illegitimate authority—are not here considered."<sup>4</sup>

A peculiar situation is presented by the statement of Peter before the Council of the Jews. There he and other apostles stated, "We must obey God rather than men."<sup>5</sup> How does this statement harmonize with the statements of Paul in Romans? This entire problem is treated by Meyer in his commentary on Acts, where he has this to say, "The maxim here expressed...takes for granted two things as certain; on the one hand, that something really is commanded by God; and on the other hand, that a demand of the rulers does really cancel the command of God, and is consequently immoral, in which case the rulers actually and willfully abandon their status as organs of divine ordination, and even take up a position antagonistic to God. Only on the assumption of this twofold

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<sup>3</sup> Compare Acts 16: 37 and II Cor. 11: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Piepkorn, A. C., "St. Paul on Social Relationships," C. T. M., Vol. XI, p. 737.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 5: 29.

certainty could that principle lead Christianity, without the reproach of revolution, to victory over the world in opposition to the will of Jewish and heathen rulers."<sup>6</sup> This qualification of Paul's injunction must not be interpreted liberally. Peter's case clearly involved a command in direct opposition to a specific command of God. There could be no doubt as to the apostles' course of action.<sup>7</sup> We dare not apply this exception unless we are equally certain that the commands of God and of men are diametrically opposed. One more argument advanced to justify revolution is that the existing government no longer performs the duties of government and so has forfeited all claim to be recognized as the government. This argument has no clear foundation in Scripture. The duties of government can be summarized as the providing for the maintenance of internal order and protection from external aggression. St. Paul's requirements of governments are the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of them that do well. Who can say when a government has failed completely in the performance of these duties?

It should be remembered that St. Paul did not intend to cover the whole field of government in this chapter or to lay down laws to cover every possible exigency. His purpose rather was to enjoin his fellow-Christians to maintain the organization of human society with its higher and lower ranks, that thereby the moral order might be preserved, yes, in a sense, that thereby the Kingdom of God on earth might be preserved.

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<sup>6</sup> Meyer, H., Acts, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Acts 4: 17-20 and 5: 27-32.

"The whole discussion presupposes normal conditions: law and its representatives are of God, and as such are entitled to all honour and obedience from Christians."<sup>8</sup>

Paul also dwelt at some length on another secular institution of that period, slavery. Much has also been written about St. Paul's stand on slavery. Some humanitarians score Paul because he did not take a definite stand against slavery. But Paul's purpose was not to upset the existing social order.<sup>9</sup> In the first place Paul's primary objective was not social. His goal was to save individual souls. If as a result of the Christianization of individuals, society would also improve, well and good. In the second place, the confusion caused by a radical social message would probably have made the further spread of the Gospel impossible. Accordingly the position which he takes on slavery is not a radical one, yet it has through the course of centuries produced a marked change in the lot of slaves and of all whose time in some measure belongs to another.

The position of the slave at Paul's time was frequently not a happy one, certainly not a desirable one. Marcus Varro, writing about 170 B.C., represents a view commonly held concerning slaves. He spoke of three classes of instruments available for aid in physical exertion.

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<sup>8</sup> Denney, James, The Expositors Greek New Testament, Romans, p. 695.

<sup>9</sup> "For the Gospel does not destroy the state or the family (buying, selling, and other civil regulations), but much rather approves them, and bids us obey them as a divine ordinance, not only on account of punishment, but also on account of conscience." Concordia Triglotta, p. 331, 57.

The first class consisted of those tools which had voice and speech, namely slaves. The second class consisted of those which had voice and no speech, namely animals; and the third class of those which had neither voice nor speech, namely wagons and other tools.<sup>10</sup> There were, of course, masters who regarded their slaves more highly and lovingly than did Marcus Varro, but on the whole the slaves about whom St. Paul wrote did not have an enviable position in the social structure. A direct result of St. Paul's writings was that this position was gradually improved, not only among slaves who had Christian masters, but also in society generally. The apostle accomplished this by removing slavery from the sphere of the obligation of force and placing it into the category of obligation of duty to Christ. "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling,<sup>11</sup> in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men."<sup>12</sup> Thus the hierarchy of service was reoriented by the addition of a third party. No longer is it only a relation between master and servant, in which the master tried to get the most work out of his servants with any means at his disposal, and the servant in turn tried to evade all possible work without bringing the

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<sup>10</sup> Cited by Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 734.

<sup>11</sup> "with that zeal which is ever keenly apprehensive of not doing enough." Meyer, Ephesians, p. 533.

<sup>12</sup> Eph. 6: 5-7. Compare also Col. 3: 22-25.

lash down upon himself. Christ is now introduced into this relationship, and the motivation becomes that of love for Christ and for the master in Christ. This new orientation was not intended only for the slaves. Paul also reminds the masters that they are no longer to regard their slaves as inanimate tools, to be worked ruthlessly. "Masters," he writes, "do the same for them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him."<sup>13</sup>

The concept of service to Christ instead of only to the master must inevitably produce a change in the nature of the service rendered. That is what St. Paul has in mind when he says that servants are no longer to be obedient in the way of eye service, as men-pleasers. This service is rendered only when the master is present. Its purpose is to deceive him and to gain undeserved favor. That cannot be the characteristic of the service rendered to his master by a bond servant of Christ. The Christian slave will serve his master "with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ." He will find joy in doing his master's will and in doing more than has been required by the master. He will not be a shirker and a loafer. He will find it impossible to indulge in the modern practice of keeping wages high by decreasing the output through loafing on the job. He will see that his master, or as he is called today, his employer, receives "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over" for his wages. Standing behind his

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<sup>13</sup> Eph. 6: 9. Compare Col. 4: 1.

employer he will always see Christ. Paul adds two further motivations for good service to the master. The first incentive is that every man will receive from the Lord entirely adequate recompense for whatever good he has done, whether he be slave or free. On Judgment Day we shall all be rewarded by God for what we have done, and this reward will not be on the basis of master and slave, with less being expected of slaves because their opportunities for service were more limited, but on the objective basis of virtue and wickedness.<sup>14</sup> The second motivation, and this applied particularly to slaves with non-Christian masters was "so that the name of God may not be defamed" by their action.<sup>15</sup> In other words, their conduct is to be such that by it God may be glorified. How this concept exalted slavery! Now the most common domestic menial, if he did his work as to Christ, was engaged in glorifying God. Impelled by such thoughts it was inevitable that the position of slavery soon rose also in the eyes of slave owners of that day who were not Christian.

However this rise in the social position of slaves presented another problem to the early Christians as they felt their way along the new social paths. Slaves and masters were told that they were all brothers in Christ. When they met in church, some slaves began to think that this produced a new relationship of equality also in the secular

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<sup>14</sup> Theoderet, cited by Meyer, Ephesians, p. 534.

<sup>15</sup> I Tim. 6: 1. Or to put it positively, slaves are "to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." Titus 2: 10.

world. Masters became brethren and familiarity and even disrespect followed. This was not God-pleasing, and Paul informed the offenders of this fact. "Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved."<sup>16</sup> "Within the church there is equality, liberty, fraternity. Yet there is neither the intention nor any sense of compulsion to transfer this situation into the social realm, either with reference to the relations of Christians with pagans, or even with reference to the relations of one Christian with a fellow-Christian. The obligation of status and contract stand unabridged and unabated."<sup>17</sup> There was no reason for either slave or master to be embarrassed by their extra-ecclesiastical relationship. The master's superior position outside the church did not permit him to adopt superior airs among the brethren. Nor did the fellowship of faith "warrant presumptuous familiarity on the part of the slaves"<sup>18</sup> in the home or the factory on Monday.

It is apparent from what has been said that Paul did not visualize the eventual disappearance of the institution of slavery. It is true that he did not, apparently, give much thought to the future effects of his remarks. It has been suggested that he expected the momentary appearing of the Parousia, and so did not give careful thought to the development of a long-range social program, one result of which would be

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<sup>16</sup> I Tim. 6: 2. Compare Titus 2: 9.

<sup>17</sup> Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 732.

<sup>18</sup> Piepkorn, loc. cit.

the abolition of slavery. In his letter to the Ephesians he suggests that he expects slavery to continue until the final judgment.<sup>19</sup>

Bishop Lightfoot argues that Paul's epistles do not permit the continued existence of slavery. He feels that slavery, even the family type which existed among the Hebrews, was only a temporary concession to be removed in the fulness of time. The apostolic concept that "in Christ Jesus is neither bond nor free" was the idea which must act as a solvent, which must eventually disintegrate "this venerable institution, however deeply rooted and however widely spread."<sup>20</sup> It seems to be a better explanation to take this phrase as an indication that the existence or non-existence of slavery is of absolutely no importance in the Christian life. "After ye have thus put on Christ, the distinctions of your various relations of life apart from Christianity have vanished; from the standpoint of this new condition they have no further validity, any more, than if they were not in existence."<sup>21</sup> This concept of Christian freedom need have no more influence on the existence of slavery as a physical institution than it will have on the difference between the sexes.<sup>22</sup>

The third important social institution with which St. Paul concerns himself is the family. Perhaps little need be said on his

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<sup>19</sup> Compare Eph. 6: 8. "knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is slave or free."

<sup>20</sup> Lightfoot, Ephesians and Colossians, p. 326f.

<sup>21</sup> Meyer, Galatians, p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> Gal. 3: 28.

viewpoint of marriage itself. It is obvious that he does not urge that there be no more giving in marriage. Nor does he advocate celibacy for all ministers of the Gospel. His remarks on the desirability of refraining from marriage were influenced by the conditions of the time and certain views apparently held by members of the Corinthian congregation.<sup>23</sup> We would rather concern ourselves with what St. Paul says of the marriage relationship and the family.

The marriage relationship is, next to the union which exists between the believer and Christ, the highest and most glorious union on earth. In a sense it approaches the glories of the union between Christ and the believer. The one is often used to illustrate the other. Thus in Ephesians, Paul states that "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body."<sup>24</sup> It was pointed out in Chapter I that "koinonia" is used to describe both the communion between Christ and the believer and that between husband and wife.<sup>25</sup>

If the great importance which God attaches to the marriage union is always kept in mind, all other duties and privileges of one spouse toward the other will be correctly evaluated and used. It will follow normally and inevitably that "the husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to the husband."<sup>26</sup> This high

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<sup>23</sup> I Cor. 7

<sup>24</sup> Eph. 5: 23-25.

<sup>25</sup> See above, page 26.

<sup>26</sup> I Cor. 7: 3. Compare also Col. 3: 18,19 and I Thess. 4: 3-6.

regard for marriage will also reduce the divorce evil, for the rupture of a union which God holds in such high esteem will not be lightly undertaken.

God not only holds the marriage covenant in high regard, but he also seals it with His most precious gift, children. God's high regard for children is illustrated by the statement of Paul to Timothy that the "woman will be saved through bearing children."<sup>27</sup> The establishment of a family places definite obligations on the parents. A primary obligation is that of supporting them. "For children ought not to lay up for the parents, but parents for their children."<sup>28</sup> But already in the apostle's time the performance of this duty could not be taken for granted. There must have been definite instance of neglect which called forth the harsh words in his letter to Timothy. "If any one does not provide for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."<sup>29</sup> Pathetic reminders of the commission of this terrible sin appear frequently in the columns of today's papers.

The parental duties do not end with the obligation of support. Parents are further to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."<sup>30</sup> This includes not only instruction by the

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<sup>27</sup> I Tim. 2: 15.

<sup>28</sup> II Cor. 12: 14.

<sup>29</sup> I Tim. 5: 8.

<sup>30</sup> Eph. 6: 4. Meyer points out that "kyriou" "is the subjective genitive, so that the Lord Himself is conceived of as exercising the training and reproof, in so far, namely as Christ by his Spirit impels and governs the children therein." Ephesians, p. 532.

parents in the home, the most important and valuable of all instruction which a child can receive. It embraces also all agencies for Christian instruction in vogue at any time. In our day we would include confirmation classes, Bible classes, Sunday School and released time classes. Of particular value are the Christian day school and high school. Parents are also to keep their "children submissive and respectful in every way."<sup>31</sup> The emphasis in this passage should perhaps be placed on ἐν ὑποταγῇ for it is the submissiveness in which children are trained in the family circle which will produce the propriety they are to manifest also in their extra-family relations. Above all, parents are to love their children and regard them as precious gifts of God.

The qualities mentioned above cannot be inculcated by precept alone on the part of Christian parents and teachers. Parental example is just as important as theoretical instruction. The spirit which pervades the training and discipline of children is important. Parents are not to provoke the child to anger<sup>32</sup> by "injustice, harshness, hastiness of temper, undue severity, and the like" lest it become discouraged.<sup>33</sup> The result may be, as Peake points out, that "his spirit is broken, and since what he does leads to constant blame, he loses hope of every being able to please."<sup>34</sup> The attitude of parents will be

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<sup>31</sup> I Tim. 3: 4. Cp. also Titus 1: 6.

<sup>32</sup> Meyer, loc. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Col. 3: 21.

<sup>34</sup> Peake, The Expositors Greek New Testament, Colossians, p. 542.

correct if they remember that their children are given them by God and that they are to love them not merely because of natural affection, but above all because they are all one "in Christ."

Children also have definite duties and obligations toward their parents. To the Ephesians Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (for this is the first commandment with promise), 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth'"<sup>35</sup> Children are to be obedient to their parents.<sup>36</sup> But this obedience is not to be formal and outward and motivated by a feeling of slavish fear. It is to spring from a heart which truly honors the parents.<sup>37</sup> The importance of filial obedience and honor is emphasized in the clause, "this is the first commandment with promise." The Revised Standard Version has, wrongly, placed this clause in parentheses.<sup>38</sup> If it is taken in a causal sense, then verses 1 and 2 of Ephesians 6 become a perfect parallel. The first and lower precept is that of obedience to parents, and the apostle says this should be the attitude of children because it is right, that is,

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<sup>35</sup> Eph. 6: 1-3. Also Col. 3: 20.

<sup>36</sup> In Romans 1: 30, Paul includes disobedience to parents as one of the terrible sins of the unbelievers.

<sup>37</sup> "Obedience is the duty; honor is the disposition of which the obedience is born." Salmond, S. D. F., The Expositors Greek New Testament, Ephesians, p. 375.

<sup>38</sup> Salmond in The Expositors Greek New Testament, and Meyer both object to placing the clause in parenthesis. They also advance the explanation offered here to explain the relationship between verse 1 and 2. See both commentaries, sub voce.

because it is required by the divine law. In the second member, Paul enjoins honoring the parents, not only because this is right according to God's law, but also because this is the first commandment with promise. Thus he raises the injunction above being only morally good. It is represented as being so important in God's sight that its fulfillment will merit all manner of blessings for the children.

A family in which these principles are the guiding ones will become the tightly knit unit which God designed it to be and will occupy the important place in the social scheme to which God originally assigned it. Such a family will be able to rise above all the obstacles to family life which our modern social structure presents. The family which does everything "in the Lord," and in which the relationship between parents and children is such as pleases God, will be showered with innumerable blessings. Surely it will be well with its members and they shall live long on the earth.

We have dealt thus far in Chapter III with three dominant social institutions of Paul's time, namely the state, slavery, and the family. The injunctions referred to were intended primarily for Christians in their relationship with these institutions. But also the unbelieving world has adopted some of these principles, and, in a measure, has altered its social behavior in accordance with them. So we must consider the behavior of the Christian as he comes into contact, not with secular social institutions, but with individual members of the secular society. Also in this area St. Paul has given specific ethical injunctions. In this field also, as we shall see, the particular commands are based on underlying principles.

The issue of the Christian's relationship with individual non-Christians must have been a particularly acute one in Paul's day, when families were divided against themselves, and when Christianity was still only a very small leaven in the Roman-Hellenistic society. But these considerations did not induce Paul so to modify his injunctions as to make it easy for Christians to find their place in the society of the day. Though the Christians were in a decided minority, and though it might, humanly speaking, have been to their advantage to accommodate themselves to their pagan environment, Paul speaks out firmly and boldly against such a policy. "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers," he writes to the Corinthians, "What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?"<sup>39</sup> St. Paul does not urge complete and absolute separation of the two groups, for he clearly recognizes that Christians would then have to leave the world.<sup>40</sup> The unequal yoking to which Paul refers here is that in which the "unbeliever forms the standard which determines the mode of thought and action of the Christian partner."<sup>41</sup> Christians will in no way be guided by heathen mores and morals. They have been called with a high calling. They will let no external bonds hinder them from walking in a manner worthy of their calling.

Yet, in spite of their refusal to be unequally yoked with unbelievers,

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<sup>39</sup> II Cor. 6: 14.

<sup>40</sup> See I Cor. 5: 9-13. Compare also Ch. 10: 27 and 7: 12.

<sup>41</sup> Meyer, H., II Corinthians, p. 554. See his discussion of this entire passage.

Christians do have definite obligations toward those who are not of the household of faith. In the first place Christians have the obligation of doing good to all men "as we have opportunity."<sup>42</sup> The phrase ὡς καιρὸν ἔχωμεν does not limit our doing good to only when or only so long as the opportunity presents itself. The καιρὸν here referred to is that time which will come to an end with the parousia.<sup>43</sup> Good deeds include our concern for, and attempts to alleviate the physical needs of our neighbor. But doing good is not confined only to those who are lower in the social scale than we are, or who have less of this world's goods. We can and must do good to all men. Often this good will be done with no reference to Christ crucified. Doing good is not a matter of choice or indifference. Christ has commanded it. Love for Him compels us to do good. By doing good to all men we are making the most of the time, we are redeeming it. If we overlook or neglect this portion of our Christian duty, then we are being poor stewards of God's gift of time. We will have to turn in an unsatisfactory report on Judgment Day, and God, who rewards us according to our deeds, will take this short-coming into consideration.

Christians living in Paul's day were subjected to persecution and slander from the unbelievers. These Christians, still being in the

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<sup>42</sup> Gal. 6: 10. Compare Titus 3: 8.

<sup>43</sup> Meyer: "This seasonable time will have elapsed, when the parousia sets in; we must therefore utilize it as ours 'by doing good to all men.'" Galatians, p. 257. On this concept of the necessity of making the most of the time compare also Eph. 5: 15. 16 and Col. 4: 5.

flesh, were in danger of adopting wrong measures to remedy this situation. But Paul says, "Do not for a moment consider that, but rather 'bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse....Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all."<sup>44</sup> We note that in this command to forego vengeance, Paul does not descend to the level of expediency for his motivation. He does not tell the Romans to refrain from vengeance because they are completely outnumbered and would surely be the losers in the long run. His admonition is rather that Christians are to strive to live in harmony with all men, even with those who persecute them and do them evil. The second half of verse 17 of Romans 12 repeats the motivation which we have discussed thoroughly in an earlier portion of this paper. As motivation Paul urges the Christians to "take thought for what is noble in the sight of all." Our high motive for not repaying evil for evil is that we may not by our conduct impede the cause of the Gospel.<sup>45</sup> But by seeking and doing what is noble in the sight of all, we shall enhance the reputation of the Gospel. By refusing the Mosaic right of an eye for an eye we will aid the spread of the Gospel among men. The thought of this passage is advanced one step further by the remark of Dr. Arndt that men, seeing the love we manifest in refraining from vengeance, will wonder why we are so. In other words, by our conduct we will have preached a very effective sermon which may in some way become in God's hands the means

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<sup>44</sup> Rom. 12: 14. 17. Compare also I Thess. 5: 15.

<sup>45</sup> Compare Lenski, Romans, p. 777.

of converting a brother for whom Christ died. That must be the nature of our love for the unbelieving brother, an intense concern for his spiritual welfare. Motivated by such a feeling, all our conduct will be in keeping with Biblical ethics. We will watch our conduct carefully, so that, with God's help, we may in no way hinder the spread or reduce the effectiveness of the Gospel. Further, we will, with God's help, so conduct ourselves that our lives will be sermons to the unbelieving brothers, announcing to them that we have found a new way of life and that we have something worthwhile. In this way we may be able to lead some of these men closer to their Savior. If those are the feelings which motivate our conduct, then everything we do will be done to the glory of God, which is the ultimate end of all God-pleasing moral conduct.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Many thoughts suggest themselves for inclusion in the concluding chapter. But we shall limit ourselves to the two questions, whether there is a basic ethical principle to be found in Paul's writings, and, if so, what his ethical system means for us today.

We have answered the first question several times, and in this chapter we need only review briefly what has already been said.<sup>1</sup> At different times we have called attention to what we have described as the dual basic principles of Paul's ethics. He states them both in his first epistle to the Corinthians, where in Chapter 10 he urges that we do everything to the glory of God, not seeking our own profit, but that of many, that they may be saved.<sup>2</sup> The first principle, that everything should be done to the glory of God, Paul applies to many of his specific injunctions. Usually he refers to it in a negative way in the commands where he warns the Christians to be careful lest by their actions they bring down slander or defanation on the Gospel. Their actions are rather to adorn the Gospel. Right behavior is one way of glorifying God, for He is a God who wants all things done decently and in order. We pointed out also that there is another and a more wonderful way of

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<sup>1</sup> See above pages

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. 10: 31. 33.

glorifying God, namely by preserving or winning for Him the human soul. With this thought we tied up the second principle of "love for the neighbor." Motivated by this love, which must be at least equal to that we hold for ourselves, we will seek the temporal and especially the eternal welfare of our neighbor. Or, to put it in the words of St. Paul, we will seek the profit of many, that they may be saved.

These basic principles can also be summarized in another way. We are saying the same thing if we lay down as the basis for Paul's ethics this injunction: Walk in love; so that you do not offend a believing brother for whom Christ has died, or so that you may gain an unbelieving brother for whom Christ has died. Briefly stated, we should walk in love so that we in no way hinder or place an obstacle in the course of the Gospel of Christ Crucified. Stated in this way, the relationship between Paul's ethics and his central teaching of Christ Crucified becomes readily apparent. This close relationship emphasizes the importance of Paul's ethical message. With Paul everything was to be done in terms of Christ Crucified. This relationship also emphasizes the unity of Paul's ethics. The admonitions of St. Paul were not added to the doctrinal portions of his epistles as an afterthought or just incidentally. They were all included in his letters for specific purposes and they are all tied together and emphasized by their relationship to Christ Crucified.

Perhaps this point can be illustrated more readily by a review of some of his injunctions. When he treats of our relationship to weaker brethren, Paul warns us to be careful lest our behavior or actions

should cause the ruin of one for whom Christ has died. Again, he sums up his remarks on our behavior as members of the body of Christ with the admonition that all things be done for the edification of the body, for its individual and collective strengthening, that it may grow up into the measure of the fulness of Christ Crucified. Or compare his remarks on excommunication. The purpose for excommunicating the erring brother is that through the destruction of his flesh, his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. His remarks on behavior in the Church are summarized in the admonition that we must be careful that the Gospel be not defamed, and consequently hindered, by anything we do. He concludes his advice to pastors with the injunction that they suffer all things rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ Crucified. His injunctions concerning our relationship with unbelievers in society also can be summed up in the advice that we be very careful that we do not hinder the Gospel or bring slander upon it by our actions.

This unity of his ethical system in its relation to the central teaching of Christ Crucified would seem by itself to indicate that we must be very hesitant in rejecting or condemning Paul's ethics, as some writers have done. His teaching of Christ Crucified is as important to us today as it was to his contemporaries. If his ethics find their source and origin in this same teaching, does it not seem logical that they also have real value and meaning for us today? Does it not follow that if the one part of his writing is fully accepted today, the other part, which is so closely linked up with it, must also be accepted? Our thesis is that both parts of his message are relevant for us and for our

times in the same degree in which they were relevant in Paul's time.

As this writer read around in the field of ethics, and as he observed the Church's application of Biblical ethics today, he was struck by the thought that, in one sense, the Church of today no longer has the complete Pauline ethical system. The Church has retained his specific injunctions with varying degrees of faithfulness, but to a considerable degree it has lost sight of the underlying principles. Now it is true that most of the specific injunctions are to be observed today just as they were when first applied to humanity. There are few possible exceptions. Perhaps the only ones, as already indicated, are those dealing with the covering of the woman's head. The Church has done right in insisting on the observance of Paul's ethical admonitions. But with this very insistence on the "external" manifestations, the Church has lost some of the power of the underlying motivations. In that fact is contained the explanation for much that has been written and said about St. Paul's ethics.

The objection has been raised that the Church has been insisting on spirit-killing over-codification of Paul's system. That objection, rightly understood, is correct. The loss of the motive power of Paul's ethics is not traceable to over-codification in itself, but to the fact that with the over-codification the emphasis has been placed on the injunctions with the result that the spirit behind them is almost completely hidden.

Other writers declare that St. Paul's ethics have little or nothing to offer modern society. This is an incorrect observation and

is usually made because the superstructure of Paul's system is mistaken for the foundation which gives rise to the superstructure. It is true that many of the specific injunctions, per se, seem in no way to affect our life today. But it must not be forgotten that these specific injunctions were designed to meet certain conditions in a particular society, which, in many respects, no longer exist today. But the underlying principles which gave rise to these specific injunctions are still valid. On the basis of these principles, the Church must restate St. Paul's principles for modern society. As was indicated in the section on society in Chapter III, one can apply many of Paul's injunctions to society today merely by substituting modern terms for those used by St. Paul. There is no phase of the complex life of today which is not covered in the writing of Paul.

It has also been objected that the ethics which St. Paul gave to the early church were "sufficiently, but not too far, ahead of the standards of his contemporaries," to inspire and motivate them. The objection goes on to state that "much which was once ahead of contemporary thought, now lags behind it."<sup>3</sup> This objection is valid. Much that was once ahead of contemporary thought now lags behind it. But that which was ahead and lags behind is the catalogue of specific admonitions. The basic principles are today, and always will be, sufficiently but not too far, ahead of the standards of contemporaries to motivate, challenge, and inspire them. It is the duty of the church to uncover again the

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<sup>3</sup> Kirsopp Lake, cited by Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 722.

underlying principles, to offer them as the guide for the Christian who is earnestly striving to do his best, but who is at times confused by commands and standards which he has difficulty in understanding.

It is hard to visualize any situation in life today which is not completely and practically covered by the ethics of St. Paul. The Church has the duty to explain the ethical system of Paul to the world today. In this system the Church has a powerful weapon for use in the spreading of the Gospel. A society in which the majority of the members were guided by the principles of "all to the glory of God" and "all out of love for the neighbor," would be one in which the task of spreading the Gospel and bringing others to the Gospel would be greatly facilitated. The Church today has come a long way from the time of St. Paul. No longer is it a minority group which had no visions of reforming the world. Today it is in the position where it should be the dominant force in society. The tool is, of course, its Biblical ethical system. The energy is to be found in the basic principles. When the Church and its countless individuals reestablish the standards of evaluating its actions on the basis of love for the neighbor and the greater glory of God, she will then have again released the full social power of the Gospel of Christ Crucified. It has the only energy which can effectively and lastingly influence society for the better.

That energy is the Gospel proclamation as summarized in the 16th verse of the third chapter of John's Gospel. The love which God poured forth so abundantly on all mankind must effect a change in the hearts of those whom the Holy Ghost has regenerated. The gradual restoration of

the divine image in their hearts will be marked by an increasingly abundant outpouring of the love which they have so freely received. It will flow in two directions. One direction will be vertical. It will return to God. Believers will find their greatest joy in doing God's will. They will find their greatest delight in seeking His glory. Love will also flow out toward the neighbor. Believers will find great happiness in contributing to the temporal or spiritual welfare of their neighbor. This motivation of love will result in social behavior that is God-pleasing. Social behavior of this sort will eventually transform the social areas with which it comes into contact. This is the behavior which Paul's ethical system, correctly applied, will produce. The Church has the glorious opportunity to spread the Gospel of this love and to direct its energy into social channels. The Church must make effective use of the Gospel of Christ Crucified in the world in which it is an intimate part!

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