

Love Thy Neighbor

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Introduction

Can you understand that if a Christian wanted to know the mind of God about social problems he should turn to the Old Testament?

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11).

Paul had just been talking about things that happened to Israel, especially in their exodus from Egypt; and after he had commented on several of those things he wrote the above. These words were not written for Israel, nor were they written for the world: they were written for believers, "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

In our day and time a great deal has been made of the responsibility of godly people to help their fellow man. We have been concerned about how people live on this earth and especially how they deal with each other. We have spoken of these things that have to do with social affairs, person to person, group affairs, as social problems. Many times people have had an idea that so far as believers are concerned, they have not done as much along the line of paying attention to social problems as might have been done. This is held to be particularly true of people who believe the Bible. Many times the people who are evangelical believers, who truly believe the Bible, are accused of not paying sufficient attention to the affairs and the problems of other people.

A believer realizes that to know what God wants him to do, he should read and study the Bible. The Scriptures were written to reveal the truth about God and about man and the world; about life and about the soul and the future. The whole truth of God is perfectly set forth in Jesus Christ in whom the believer trusts and to whom the believer looks for help and blessing; but to see Jesus Christ so that you will know what you are going to believe and whom you are going to believe, you must know the Old Testament story and narrative, the promises, the ritual and the prophecies that are in the Old Testament. In Romans 15:4 we read, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

When Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead, and in His resurrection body appeared to His disciples on the road to Emmaus, and also afterwards when He appeared to them in the upper room – talking with them, teaching them – He used the Old Testament Scriptures to open their understanding. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). The only Scripture He had was the Old Testament. The New Testament was not yet written, but here was the Lord Jesus Christ in person walking with them, after He had been raised from the dead. He was interpreting things for them and teaching them. Couldn't He just show Himself? Couldn't He just ask them to look at Him? But He went to the Old Testament Scriptures, and opened up their understanding so that they might see the truth that was being demonstrated before them in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When He was in the upper room with all the disciples He said unto them,

"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

So we turn to the Bible with confidence that we might learn what God has in mind for us to know. The Bible shows the spiritual relationship between man and God. It simply says to man, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." This is recognized as the first great commandment. But the Bible also tells about the relationship between man and man, which we call the social relationship; and there is Scriptural admonition for that: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is the second great commandment. I think it is reasonable enough so that we can understand the fact that among churches, believers and preachers, teaching and preaching the Gospel, the major concern is focused on the first commandment; because until a person gets right with God there is no point learning anything else. But it is important and it is necessary that believers should study the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In doing this now we shall study social principles as they are revealed in the Old Testament.

Today, as we have just said, our generation is challenged on every side to deal with social problems. We raise the question, should a believer in Christ be concerned? We say "Yes," because people are having social troubles. How much should a believer be interested? As long as and as much as there is any way to help them. Inasmuch as the believer is a human being, he is involved with all other men in human affairs. Now we raise the question: Does the Bible give any guidance for dealing with other men as men, and with people as people? We know that Christ Jesus was interested in people. In fact, that is why He came. And we know He did not come only for good people, for He said Himself: "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). He came for people in need and in trouble. He performed many miracles for people who were in trouble. So we conclude if a believer is led by the Spirit of God, he will care about other people.

In reading the record of how God created the world and man, what should happen in the man to man relation that would please God? The first thing we should note is the nature of man as revealed in Scripture; because he is the person we are going to be talking about. What then is the truth about this human being as seen in Scripture? "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). This is man's original design. This is how he got started. This indicates that he originated in the spiritual world for it was God who did this thing. In this action of God making man there is a vertical relationship from this earth straight up to God; from God straight down to this earth. God had everything to do about making man.

But Scripture reveals more about man. "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). This is a profound comment about the nature of man. This indicates that man is a social person rather than a solitary being. God did not make man to be alone. He made man to be with other men. The moment you think of man with other men your mind is drawn to a horizontal relationship. Thus it is possible to see that man has relationships in two directions. Because God made him, and made him in His own image, there is a spiritual, vertical relationship between man and God. And because God made man as he is, so that it is not good for him to be alone, there is a horizontal, side-to-side relationship between man and man. And because of this second aspect we say that man is primarily a social being rather than an individual being.

Human nature developed along these two lines, these two axes. The vertical relationship with God is controlled by the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." This puts man in right relationship with God. The horizontal relationship is controlled by the second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This puts man in right relationship with other men.

I wonder if you would be able in your mind to picture this? If I were standing before you to put this on a blackboard, would you see that if I drew a mark on the board from man to God straight up and down, I would have a vertical line? If I drew across from man to man, I would have a line running hori-

zontally. If I put the horizontal line on that vertical line, you would see that I would have a cross. That is where the Cross of Calvary fits in a very remarkable way.

You will notice that while the Cross of Calvary has two bars, so to speak, an upright and a crossbar, that the crossbar is held up by the upright. It is the upright that holds the crossbar in place. Now let me tell you about the flow of electric power. If you had an electric current running from one point to another, that electric current would throw off impulses at right angles that are called vectors. If a current is flowing from north to south there will be on both sides at right angles impulses flowing out east and west. This suggests in a very striking way that the Cross of Calvary in its very design just matches, covers, the nature of mankind. There is the vertical axis: up and down from man to God; and there is the horizontal axis from side to side, from man to man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Man Is A Social Being

Can you realize how true it is that every person needs to get along with other people in order to be well?

We are studying the second great commandment. Usually the interest of any person is focused on the first one: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; and we need to recognize that the second is like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Human beings need to know this to be wise in life. Most human troubles arise from the fact that men are not keeping this second commandment. That is not just because it would be a good idea to follow its guidance, but because that is the way this universe is built. It is because we want blessing from God, and we are looking to Him to learn His will, that we turn to the Scriptures to ask ourselves at the very outset: does the Bible have anything to say about how we should deal with other people?

The Bible begins by revealing the nature of man as seen in the account of creation. The Bible seldom tells us in so many words what we should think or how we may understand. It shows us how things work and then lets us "mix it ourselves", so to speak. In each generation, in each culture, and in each language, there are different ways to describe the revelation. We will be thinking here about what kind of being man is. Let us see how he was created.

There are two things we want to consider about man in his creation: first he was created in the image of God. This means that the Bible reveals man as a spiritual being. The creature we call man was not made according to the things we can see, but according to what we don't see; namely, according to God. The second feature about man is that it was not good for him to be alone. He was made that way. This indicates that he is what we call a "social being." This does not mean that he likes to be with other folks, or that he wants to be with other folks. It is saying that he must be with other folks. If a human being is not with other human beings he will not be normal, This is implied in the Scriptures when we read further that God said about man, "I will make him a help meet for him."

The word "meet" means "equal to", one that suits him, that fits him. "I will make him a helper; he won't be alone. I am going to give him someone else who will be equal to him." We may note in passing that animal pets will not do. A man may have them if he wants them, but they will always be extras. They come next. This social aspect of man, that man needs help from another like himself, equal to himself, is part of the nature of man. The Bible shows how God provided for man in this respect when it records that it was the will of God that a man should leave his father and mother, and should cleave to his wife: and they should be one flesh.

This is tremendously important because this is the way man was made. This whole truth is reflected in the two great commandments. The first commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God": and the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We have noted that the first commandment is vertical: straight up; whereas the second one is horizontal: from side to side. Once more looking at the Cross of Calvary, we note it was made of two beams of wood: one going straight up, the other going from side to side. You will notice again the one that goes from side to side, the horizontal one, is held up by the upright one, the one that goes up and down. This seems to say that the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is basic. This is the axis that holds a man up. The second one, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," broadens the man's outlook and may enrich his experience, but it is held up by the first one.

Sometimes when I was teaching in Seminary and trying to get this idea across to the students I would ask them if they had dealt with the ordinary things of life enough to know what would happen if you had two beams, or planks of wood, and set one upright and laid the second flat on the ground. They would know that if you put a beam of wood flat on the ground and leave it there for awhile it will decay. If you pick it up, so that you set it up from the ground – and that is what is done in the cross – then it will last. Right there is a parable that will help in thinking about the Gospel.

The Gospel has these two points of emphasis: one toward God, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; and the other toward man: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In an interesting way the same truth is brought out in the description of sin as recorded in the Bible. The first sin in the garden of Eden caused the fall of man: this we find in Genesis 3. This sin was essentially a case of man's disobedience to God. The second sin recorded in the Bible is when Cain killed his brother, Abel. This sin developed in hatred of another person. In these two ways – disobedience to God and hatred of other people – sin develops among men.

Our special interest will be in the second commandment, the horizontal relationship, the man to man relationship. We want to learn what God has to say about this. We recognize that this comes second in the constitution of human nature. We know that first comes man's relationship with God, but the second is just as real; and if we do not pay attention to it we will miss something vital. The Bible says of man that it is not good for him to be alone. This indicates that man should be considered as "social" rather than as an individual. I know man is an individual, but he is an individual-in-the-crowd, in a group. He is never alone. If a man were totally alone, he would not be a normal man.

In thinking about social relations – person to person, man to man, from side to side – we can see the primary social structure for mankind is the home. That is the first place man lives with other people. The home is based on the fact that the man has a helper equal to him. This fact in the home results in two characteristics in human affairs: helpfulness to each other and equality with each other. This in turn establishes a basic social principle. It may sound like a heavy phrase, but the basic idea in all social affairs must be equality between persons.

If any man has trouble accepting this concept he should stop right here. Any person that has any difficulty accepting this principle will never understand God's idea of human living. Among men as created by God there must be equality. Of course this does not signify everybody is like everybody else; such is not the meaning. But there is a real sense in which each person – as he is, as she is – has equal standing with anyone else in the sight of God.

Not only does the basic social principle involve equality: it also involves mutuality. I do not know a better word. Mutuality is present when two are together, involved in each other; rather than each having individuality and being alone. This basic social principle means that everyone should have in mind that it is the plan of God that we should deal with each other rather than each living by himself or herself.

In the home when this principle is observed, we find the surrender of the individual autonomy – the individual being in himself as he is by himself. Such isolation will not do. The normal man must sur-

render any idea that he is alone. And this is absolutely essential in the marriage relationship which is the basis of the home. Ordinarily it will not cause trouble. It need not be necessary to tell a young man and a young girl when they are getting married that they should surrender to each other. They are in love. When a man loves his wife, he will not be thinking only of himself; he will be thinking of her. And when a woman loves her husband she will not be thinking of herself; she will be thinking of him. This involves the surrender of the individual's own way of doing things. Another aspect that will appear is commitment to mutual unity. "The twain shall be one flesh." The only way in the world that two persons can be one flesh is for each one to give up something of himself. This is the primary truth in the second great commandment. Nothing can ever take the place of this principle in understanding social relationships: if a person wants to get along with other people, he must give up something of his individuality in order to gain something of mutuality.

Social Disorder

Can you understand that men being brothers will not prevent difficulties between them such as social problems?

We are considering matters which are related to the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We turn to the Bible to learn the truth about how God would have men deal with men that we might know about the nature of social affairs. I now want to draw your attention to the first instance of social affairs in the world as you and I know it according to the Bible. This involved Cain and Abel. They were the first two persons to live in this world in normal human relation such as you and I experience. They were brothers who were born of human parents and lived in this world.

In reading the short account of their history something should be noted at once. The fact is that individual differences are real. Cain and Abel were two distinctly different persons. They were different in their occupations. Cain was a tiller of the soil; we would call him a farmer. Abel was a keeper of sheep. There was also a difference in their attitudes. When Abel brought his offering, he was acceptable to God. Cain's offering was not acceptable to God. This needs to be studied carefully because some will say that the difference in the one being acceptable and the other not being acceptable was due to the difference in their offerings. Abel brought a living sacrifice, and Cain brought of the fruit of the field. Without discounting the possibility there may be some truth in this observation, the fact remains that the record in Scripture is that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:4-5). It is true the offering was included in what made Abel acceptable, but the reference to the man comes first. Since the Scripture bears clear witness that "God is no respecter of persons," it would seem that the inference is clear that the difference in treatment from God is grounded in a difference in the men themselves: their attitudes toward God were different.

The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering but to Cain and his offering He did not have regard. This individual difference between Cain and Abel resulted in what I am going to call a discrepancy in prestige. There was a difference in the way they were rated. We read, "The Lord had respect unto Abel" and we read, "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." The obvious fact was that Abel was acceptable to God and that Cain was not acceptable to God. This amounted to a big difference in their prestige. And this difference (I call it discrepancy) aroused a sense of personal ego in Cain. He noticed that Abel was preferred before him.

When I speak of "personal ego" I am implying Cain was very sensitive about what concerned him

personally. His sense of his personal "I" was not to his liking. He felt that Abel was rated ahead of him. This pointed to a difference between the two men, and this in turn led to an impression of "inequality." Whether this impression was valid or not can be argued, but that does not really seem to matter. If a man has the impression he is being "low rated," and if he feels he is not being treated fairly, he will be inclined to have certain feelings of resentment.

This resentment could also be called "alienation." Actually, Cain 's face fell; he took the impression of unfavorable comparison to heart. This sort of attitude also generates "grievance." Whether the grievance is real or fancied will not make any difference. We can feel the hatred in his heart when we read I John 3:12-15:

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

This is very straight talk. It brings out the tremendous truth that if I have in my heart a feeling of hatred, animosity, objection, hostility against anybody, I am sinful in the sight of God.

Cain and Abel were created equal. They had the same parents. They were born into the same world but they were not alike. We should keep this in mind as we are thinking about these two brothers. It appears that individual differences led to distinction. They were treated differently. Distinctions invite comparison, from which one gets the impression of inequality, and this arouses "hostility." This in turn leads to envy, that into jealousy, and then comes anger, malice, hatred, and finally violence.

In this simple sketch is to be seen the origin of "social disorder." It can be traced all the way back to the principles which 10 are manifested here. Here, in the opening chapters of the Bible, we have an instance which shows how it happened that human beings even though brothers reached the place where one would kill the other. Individual autonomy means "I" thinking of me by myself: I, and I alone. When you say "I" instead of "we" (which promotes welfare) there is enmity. Where individual autonomy (with emphasis on "I") is insisted upon instead of mutual unity ("we" for welfare) there is enmity with inherent animosities to destroy and to kill. So we can see here, while looking at Cain and Abel, the elements that cause social problems; that in course lead to social disorder.

If I were to list them, I would say that things like these: individuality, ego (emphasizing "I"), personal differences (and they may be real), comparison, cause friction and trouble by making distinctions. We rate one person and then the other person. This one is strong; that one is weak. This one is good; that one is bad. Then we begin to identify people by their distinctions. This arouses envy because one has the feeling he is just as good as the other, and is being unfairly discriminated against. This generates jealousy, when you each have something, but he has more than you have. That can bother you. After you have been jealous for awhile you become easily provoked. This leads to anger and malice (in which you mean to do the other person harm). Soon there is hatred deep down in your heart because it is not only that you do not like him, the truth is you positively dislike him. Eventually there will be violence, when you will actually act to do the other person harm. This is the origin and the course of social disorder everywhere in the world. We are trying to understand how things really are in this world. In the 4th chapter of Genesis we have had it set before us in the case of Cain and Abel. We come away with a very sober thought. "He that hateth his brother" – (anybody who has a low opinion of his brother and puts him down) "is a murderer." That is the way the Bible states it.

Social Control

Can you understand the benefits of having society as a whole act to protect the innocent and the weak?

We are searching the Scriptures to learn the guidance that God can give to men to help them do right by each other. God is interested in the way people deal with one another. It is in man dealing with man that we have the origin of our social problems. In our own time, social problems seem to be uppermost in the minds of people generally. "Man's inhumanity to man " has been deplored throughout the ages, but just now it is flagrant. All of us talk about it and we agree it should not be. No doubt, many problems are natural enough. Many conflicts seem to be unavoidable between people just as they are. Yet there must be a right way to go.

I know that when we put the strong and the weak together, they are not the same. They cannot get along equally in their performance yet there must be a right way for them to deal with each other. The good and the bad must live in the same community: there must be a right way for them to be associated with each other. So we raise the question at this time: how can people deal with people? What does the Bible say about this?

We look into the Scriptures to learn about man. What kind of being is he? This inspired account, the Scriptures, which tells the events that happened back in the early days of mankind, will help us to understand men. So far we have noted that man as created from God has two dimensions. He is a spiritual being and he is a natural being. There are two great commandments that he must respond to: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," which operates in the spiritual; and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which operates in the natural. This is not to say that they are ever separated. This is not to say that in the spiritual, the second is not involved; and that in the natural, the first is not involved. They are both there at all times, but we see the first more clearly in spiritual matters and we see the second more clearly in natural matters.

Man is sinful in both these dimensions, in both areas. Self was enthroned in the place of God when Adam fell into sin; and self is considered in the place of others when Cain kills his brother, Abel. In each case, both Adam and Cain are acting in the interests of what they conceive would be in the interests of "self."

When man lives together with men, the primary social institution, the primary structure in society, is the home. The home has two aspects: helpfulness to each other and mutuality in interest and values. In other words, these beings (two or more) who live together in the home, are equal to each other and they have mutual interests. But men are different. We saw that when we contrasted Cain and Abel. Because his ego was threatened, Cain was jealous of Abel. He felt that when Abel was preferred before him, something was against him, and he took this to heart. He not only was jealous and envied him, but he was provoked to kill his brother. This was social disorder.

As we go on in our study it is obvious that this calls for "social control." Social order – when people treat each other right – is to be maintained by social control. This was revealed in Genesis 9:5-6 (commonly called the Covenant with Noah):

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man 's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man."

The key thought in this passage is: "Whoso sheddeth man 's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And the reason is given: "For in the image of God made he man." The covenant with Noah fixes responsibility on the group, on mankind as a whole. This means that all the values we have and enjoy and appreciate, are

to be secured in the common social order.

When we think about living in this world, how do we feel about property? Would we not think that our property is our own? Would you not feel if you own a house that it is yours? What about your life? Would you not think your life should be protected for you? But what about the rights of anyone individual? Is anyone person actually to be free to live by himself and to do as he pleases? No. We count on every person keeping the traffic laws, every person obeying the pure food laws, every person watching out for quarantine signs. We have these various ways of controlling the activity of people in a group, and we count on each person keeping those general rules.

Whom do the police represent? Don't they represent everybody? Whom do the firemen represent? They are hired and they are paid for by the people, by everybody. Who pays the teachers? Don't the people pay for them? How do we have hospitals? I know there are private hospitals, but there are also large general hospitals that are operated by the county or the state. To whom do they belong? To everybody. What about welfare agencies? What about the various things that are done in Red Cross and all other various ways in which people help others? Who is responsible for that? It is the public – the people as a whole. The group that is called "society" has the responsibility to care for the individual. This is the principle embodied in the covenant with Noah in the Bible. The group, society, is to restrain violence by the use of violence if and when necessary. This is what the Bible says.

The group (or "society") is responsible for protecting the life of the innocent and the weak. Capital punishment when it is exercised by intelligent people, is never a punishment. It is a treatment of an act, that is to tell the world how society feels about that act. Society has nothing against the individual involved. As a matter of fact, when believers know about someone condemned to death, it is common for them to send missionaries who will try to take some message to the condemned man in the form of tracts or books, seeking to persuade him to put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ so that he might not die forever, even though society must go through with the sentence of death placed upon him because he killed somebody.

Let us consider this further. When society invokes capital punishment, when society enforces the will of the people to restrain violence by the use of violence, society enforces a certain semblance, an appearance of, peace which protects the innocent and the weak. This is the government of the people, by the people, for the people. Or you could say: this is government of the group, by the group, for the group. This is truly self-government. Society as a whole, the group as a whole, should be responsible to restrain the aggressors, the wicked, violent people from hurting others. And that is what the covenant with Noah was saying. This is the function of social control.

Another incident, commonly called the incident with Ham, reflects the function of social control. "And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant" (Genesis 9 :20-27).

There is much to be noted in this event, but let us consider first this significant statement: "And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." It is a sobering fact that Canaan was not there at the time. He was a son of Ham. This story is quite simple yet very profound. Noah was a good man; but here he was under the influence of wine, in a deep sleep. Ham saw him in this predicament. He saw his father in a situation that was altogether to Noah's disadvantage. Ham told his brothers. The significance of what Ham did can be seen best when we contrast it with what Shem and Japheth did. They took a garment, laid it upon their shoulders, went backward and covered the nakedness

of their father. Their faces were backward. "They saw not their father's nakedness." That remark is repeated twice.

Now note what followed. "Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him." There is no mention made of the other two, because that is not what the story is about. Doubtless, Noah knew what they had done, but the focus of the story is upon Ham, that bad example. Noah did not impose arbitrarily any sentence of judgment on Ham. Noah simply announced what was going to happen because social conduct reveals individual attitudes and these bring personal consequences.*

* To hold that Canaan was cursed because Noah wanted to vent his personal wrath upon Ham and anyone of his descendants is to mistake the meaning of this whole incident. Canaan would suffer personally because his father's attitudes manifested in his conduct, showing lack of respect and lack of charity would bring social consequences that would handicap his descendants in their social relationships. The curse upon Canaan has no biological implications, but it does have sobering spiritual implications.

Social Differences

Do you think the conduct of a person is caused by his circumstances?

Why do people act as they do? Do you think it is because of their circumstances, or do you think the circumstances in which they live merely provide an occasion for that person to do what he wants to do? There is some difference in those two points of view.

In studying the Scriptures to see how God judged persons as they dealt with other persons, we are now looking at an incident with Ham, which is spoken of early in the Bible. There were not many people in the world at that time. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth. The incident we refer to occurred when Ham came upon his father when he was in a drunken condition. Ham told the brothers what he had seen. The brothers took a garment, placed it upon their shoulders, went in backwards so that they would not see, and covered their father. When Noah awoke and knew what had happened, he pronounced judgment, or a curse, upon Ham.

However, this does not mean that Noah became angry and peevish, and then condemned Ham as punishment. I suspect, as I think about it, that Noah's heart may very well have been full of grief when he saw what actually was true. Ham's conduct was something that was going to place him in a certain position and make of him a certain kind of person – a servant of servants he would be. Believe me, that principle is just as true as history.

Let us look more closely at this matter. We are trying to learn what will happen under God when people deal with people. Here we have a case where Ham did something he should not have done, and this had certain unhappy results. One of the first observations we can make is the fact that Shem, Ham and Japheth being brothers did not guarantee a similar social outlook. They did not feel the same way about things. In this instance, we see their attitudes toward their father: when Ham saw Noah's disadvantage, he went out and talked about it; when Shem and Japheth heard about it, they came and covered him up. This was a radical difference in attitude among brothers who grew up in the same family.

In the second place, social conduct on the part of any individual varies with his social outlook and attitude. The brothers felt differently, and that is why they acted differently. Third, there is the matter of social entail, i.e., social consequence. Something is going to happen as a result (following wrong conduct) that has bearing on a person's relationship with other people, upon the next generation.

Those who follow in the next generation are the heirs in every way of their parents and their grandparents. It is true social conduct varies in line with social outlook; but there is a social consequence upon

the next generation following conduct of all kinds. In this case it was Ham who went out and talked about his father, but it was his son, Canaan, who was put under the curse. On the basis of what is recorded here when it was said of Canaan that a servant of servants should he be, we may conclude that social status, the rating a person has, is the consequence of social conduct; which comes from social attitudes, and is maintained in social outlook.

What is being shown here is that the consequence which follows social action is the status a person arrives at because of the way others will consider him. In other words, the way they esteem him will be the result of the way he acts. His actions are the result of his attitudes. His attitudes are according to the way he thinks. Canaan inherited the "servant of servants" role as a consequence of the conduct of his father. It was Ham who mistreated Noah; it was Ham who impudently neglected to do anything for Noah; but it was his son, Canaan, who suffered. This principle "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" is absolutely true down to the third and fourth generation. This is often obvious in the natural world.

Ezekiel reports this proverb : "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2). This is not true in spiritual matters; but it is true in natural matters. We can rejoice that in the spiritual world, social differences and discrepancies tend to disappear. Differences between persons do not arise in the spiritual setting. In Christ Jesus all social differences disappear; as in Galatians 3:28 where we read, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." All of these are social distinctions, and as such they are human distinctions: they all pass away in Christ Jesus. But this is true only for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Social differences are real in this world. These show up in the way people live and how they are rated. Sometimes the work they do for a living causes them to be put on different levels so far as this world is concerned. These distinctions lead to separation into classes. If there is a problem of getting persons of different classes together I often think of this illustration: suppose a lady planned a party in her home to which she invited her friends. Let us say one guest, a farmer, came dressed in his farm clothes; another was Dick, a mechanic, who came dressed in his garage outfit; while the third guest, Harry the professor, came in his broadcloth suit. How could the hostess have all these at her dinner table at one time without causing embarrassment? There is one way she could accomplish it: if each joined the Marines and wore a Marine uniform, Tom would then not look like a farmer, Dick would not look like a mechanic, and Harry would not look like a professor: each would look like a Marine and because they did they could be together without strain or tension of embarrassment.

It is in this way that social differences can be understood to disappear in Christ Jesus. Because this is true, the Christian will conduct himself in any social situation where there are strong and weak, smart and dumb, good and bad, with compassion and restraint; he realizes the spiritual significance is greater than the natural differences. The natural differences are there but he does not have to think of them. As variant as the social status may be, you can put a foreman and a worker, a day laborer and a stockholder, together at the same table provided you don't think about where they are in business; just think about them as people.

The spiritual significance, man to man, is greater than the natural significance according to what you are in that company. So we say, as variant as the social status may be, the spiritual mutual equality is much more important. This is brought out several ways in the Bible. Let me give you some texts to study. In Ephesians 6:5-9 we read:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh . . . as the servants of Christ . . . And, ye masters, do the same things (treat your servants right) unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven."

In Colossians 3:22 and 4:1,

"Servants, obey in all things your masters. . .knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

In I Corinthians 7:21-23,

"Art thou called being a servant? care not for it."

Paul then admonishes them to conduct themselves in such a way that when the Lord does come, He will reward them for the way they conduct themselves. In I Peter 2:18-25 we read, "Servants, be subject to your masters . . ." All of this would indicate that although 18 your status may be inferior, you may be a servant or a hand laborer, the very fact that everybody involved is before God makes a difference in a person's conduct.

Christ Jesus, when He was here in this world, submitted Himself to social injustice to achieve spiritual ends. Disorderly social conduct, such as that of which Ham was guilty, brings about a lack of respect and lack of charity. This results in a lower social status for the wrongdoer and for his family. When Ham acted that way he showed a lack of mutuality, and disqualified himself from the privileges that come to those who recognize equality. He did not treat Noah like himself; he treated him as something less. These are things that come to our minds when we think in terms of the social differences that were seen in connection with the incident involving Ham. I will have more to say about this because it is very important. But we are seeing here an instance where human beings did not treat each other right. What happened? You will find that God was interested in this. He watched over what they did, and He ruled always in favor of that which is right and true. This included the idea that each one should be thinking of the welfare and happiness of the other one in the sight of God.

Social Principles

Do you realize that it takes more than being close together to solve problems between human beings?

We are studying the scriptures to learn about human affairs. We want to know how men should deal with men in the sight of God. We shall not be looking so much to see what is recommended to be done as a matter of personal advantage, nor what is commanded to be done as a matter of blind obedience, but rather what is called for in the very nature of things, the way men are created, to recognize what is actually effectual. We know God made man, and God watches over man. God has ideas about how men should deal with men, and He is interested to see how they will live. It is a popular error, commonly speaking, to think that man is put here to do the best he can. A man may naturally feel as though he had been set loose in this world, and left to go out and do the best he is able, to make what he can of it. This leaves the impression that all that happens is up to man.

So far as his choice of action is concerned, it would be he is free to do as he wills. Men are sensitive about this "privilege." Nobody is to tell anyone what to do: each person is to be free. So far as performance is concerned, man is to go as far as he can. This is the common feeling that people have.

However, we should remember that commonly speaking people do not believe in God. So this is the natural man's point of view as an unbeliever. And this leads to the mistaken notion that man is free to do as he pleases. There could not be a bigger mistake than that. To begin with, any person very probably has in mind to do pretty much what the parents had in mind. Any person derives a great deal in heredity from his father and mother and in culture from the community in which he lives. There are really very few things a man is actually free to do. But he has the feeling that he is free. As a matter of fact the Gospel reveals there is a sense in which man is free in the matter of choice, but he will be really free in the Lord.

We have been studying the first case of social disorder, by which we mean something going on

between men that is wrong. That was the case of Cain and Abel, when one brother killed the other. The second incident was that of Ham, seeing his father lying naked in the tent, and going out to talk about it. The wrong action in each case resulted from a wrong outlook. Cain had a wrong idea and he carried this out so that he killed Abel. Ham had a wrong idea and he carried it out, acting the way he did with lack of respect and lack of charity, showing himself to be sadly wrong.

Cain ignored the fact that people belong together in what I am calling "mutuality"; what I mean is that Abel was his brother, and Cain ignored that. He was more conscious of "ego", of himself, than he was of his brother. If he had been more conscious of his brother he would not have objected to the fact that his brother was doing well. But he was thinking of himself and for this reason he ignored what I have named "mutuality." Ham also ignored this. He was more conscious of his own ego and his own feeling of superiority than he was of his father. He was thinking about himself and his own amusement, more than he was thinking about his father in his condition.

From a natural point of view there were individual differences in these persons. Cain and Abel were different. Ham is different from Shem and Japheth. The difference between these people, respectively, had shown up in their outlook and led to difference in conduct. This ended for them with a difference in status. So far as Ham was concerned, "a servant of servants would he be," and all his family after him. Spiritually speaking all men have a common origin in the creative will of God. God made them all and they all have to deal with God. On the basis of this common origin in the will of God there is really no difference between them which is to be recognized in the spiritual world.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it" (I Corinthians 4:7)? It seems quite clear what Paul is saying. These Corinthian believers belonged together. They were all members of one body. Comparing themselves one to another was not wise. It was when comparison was made that Cain became jealous of Abel. It would not be easy to explain Ham's mind: but perhaps we do not have to explain a foolish mind. It will be enough to say that was the way it was with Ham. In any case, these men individually felt themselves to be different. From the standpoint of the Gospel Paul would challenge these Corinthians: "who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

The fact is some people are rich and some are poor; some people are strong and some are weak, some are good and some are bad. The Scriptures would lead us to feel that the actual difference between those people is more apparent than it is real underneath. Basically, each one of them is a creature of God, and underneath each one deals with God. They may differ, man to man, but they do not differ in the sight of God.

At this point we should make several observations as we are trying to understand what the Bible tells us about people, and about people dealing with people. Over and over I have heard it emphasized that we should remember that we are brothers; and so we should strive for brotherhood. As I think about the first brothers on the face of the earth, it seems clear to me that being brothers did not prevent disorderly conduct. Cain was Abel's brother; but he killed him. When people tell me that I ought to act like a brother, or that I ought to be a brother, I want to ask: "Which brother? Which one do you mean, Cain or Abel?" Being a brother does not guarantee much.

Take the case of Ham as an example. Ham was a brother of Shem and Japheth; yet events led to the result that Ham was to be a servant of servants so far as these others were concerned. Think of Joseph: he had brothers – eleven of them. Ten of them agreed to destroy him. When we think about those ten brothers of Joseph we see that they sold him as a slave; they threw him into a pit and when strangers came by they sold him as a slave to get rid of him. Being brothers did not prevent disorderly conduct. Actually the brethren ignored what I have called mutuality. Actually these people were made together: they belonged together. It was clearly with them as the Scriptures say: "God hath made of one blood all

nations of people on the face of the earth." There is a sense in which all people were originally made by God. Thus it is true they started out together. But these people – Cain, Ham, the brothers of Joseph – ignored this fact, and social disorder was the result.

We should also remember this in spiritual matters. Actually in the spiritual aspect of things there are no real differences between people. Scriptures say that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian or Scythian, male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus. This is exactly true. In Galatia there would be a difference, but not in Christ Jesus. Yet it is true that even so far as believing persons are concerned, when they deal with people as human beings while they themselves are human beings they will have trouble. They won't agree, they won't get along, and they won't be alike because some are strong and weak, good and bad, rich and poor. These are all mixed in together and so we will not get along. People will not do it. Believers could look at other people with the eye of Christ, with the mind of God. God made every one of them. God will judge and will keep every one of them; God gave His Son to die for them, and when they come to the Cross of Calvary, there is no difference: whosoever will may come.

This is the origin of that common Gospel truth prevailing throughout the whole world, that there should be accounted no difference between people. When we say there should be no difference, we are assuming the spiritual aspect in which there is no difference. We want to make one other observation about the consequences for the next generation. When Ham did wrong, Noah announced his fate, but he talked about Ham's son, Canaan; and said, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be." Which is to say, Ham's misconduct affected his children. Consequences follow for the next generation, which we commonly call the curse of Canaan.

Many are inclined to hold that this curse upon Canaan belongs to the flesh descendants of Canaan. We should all remember very clearly that such consequences do not follow biological lines. The "curse upon Canaan " does not fall upon every biological child of Canaan. But it applies to those who act like Canaan. Consider what we know about the blessing of Abraham. This blessing does not come to every flesh descendant of Abraham. Ishmael was a descendant of Abraham, but he did not get the blessing. Yet the blessing of Abraham comes upon every spiritual descendant of Abraham. Anybody who acts like Abraham, who has faith like Abraham, will be blessed as he was (Galatians 3:29); and anybody who acts like Ham will be cursed the way Canaan was. All this is to emphasize that the curse upon Canaan is not inherited by natural succession. There is no particular race in the world today that can be called the descendants of Canaan. But there are people who inherit a curse, and I can tell you who they are: the gossips: those who talk about other folks to their hurt. This applies to all who are spiritually like Canaan.

So we commend ourselves to God. We have been talking about how people deal with people. We have been noting that some things that happen do so because people themselves simply do not follow in God's way and in His will.

Social Structure

Can you understand that the most important part of what any man has was given to him?

We are studying the Scriptures to understand about people dealing with people. What does God have in mind about how a man should deal with another man? There is a big difference between how I was created – how God made me – and what I think I am – what I think I could do. All men are creatures of God. God is no respecter of persons. We have differences of opinion about people: some folks we do not like; some folks we like more, some folks we like less. But every individual living being who is called man is a creature of God, and He is no respecter of persons. He cares about all men. This is to His glory.

God made man in such a way, and made the world in such a way, that man needs help to live in this world. God is available for help, and He wants man to walk in His way so that man might be blessed. But there is a sad truth: because man can overestimate his own ability, he can become self-centered in sin. Simply stated, a man can reach the point where he trusts in himself. This is so natural: many people live this way with no bad conscience at all. They think it is up to them to make their way. They are mistaken; because it is not up to them. God has everything in His hands.

We shall now look at an incident in the Old Testament that is a classic illustration of people getting together and trying to do something. You will recognize it at once.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:1-9).

That is the story, actually a rather simple one. This was a project that was conceived by men who had confidence in themselves, and who were going to try by human effort and by human skill, by human industry and by human knowledge, to arrange for security and satisfaction. Men wanted to be safe, and men wanted to be satisfied. The men said to each other, "Let us make bricks. Let us build a wall. Let us make a tower lest we be scattered." The story goes on very simply to say that God looked down upon it and pronounced His judgment. He said in effect, "This idea they have is not good. If they succeed with this, they will get to where they will never want to turn to God. They will never want to depend on God. Let us confound their language that they may not understand each other."

Many times I have wondered about that. What do you think happened when God fixed man so that he would not understand the other man's language? Did something happen to man's vocal equipment or to his hearing? Just what did occur? There is no doubt that this phenomenon exists everywhere on the face of the earth.

In all major languages there are many dialects springing up, so that people living in one part of the country can often not understand people in another part of the same country. In any event God fixed it so that men could not get together, men could not understand each other. As a further result they cannot agree, because they do not have the same ideas. It sounds to me almost as though God in Heaven reached down and adjusted a set screw in man's constitution in such a way that when two men get together to talk, they will not exactly understand each other! If more men get together, they understand each other less. This is how it is in this world even now.

It is remarkable that on the occasion of Pentecost, God again affected men's speech with the result that all spoke the words of God and everybody understood what was said in his own language. Apparently at that time God brought them together to speak one language. At Babel when they wanted to do this God scattered them. When men aimed at togetherness in their own abilities, it resulted in their being scattered abroad. This is not the only time such a result has happened to man. The very thing he tried for without the help of God was the very thing he lost.

What happened at Babel resulted in a new classification. This marked the beginning of a new category of human being. Now there is the stranger, the alien. For the first time in the Bible we read of folks who are now strangers. When we read about Abraham we note that he was a stranger, a foreigner.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country , and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed " (Genesis 12:1-3).

In these words Almighty God promised to Abraham the very things the men of Babel wanted. They had wanted security and satisfaction, and here God promises to Abraham security and satisfaction. God is going to give him exactly what he needs. The inspired comment about this is illuminating:

"By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles (that is, in tents) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God " (Hebrews 11:9-10).

What was recorded about the men of Babel? They said, "Let us make us a city. Let us build us a city." That sounds like a laudable enterprise. Abraham, on the other hand "looked for a city whose builder and maker is God." Right here are revealed two different points of view: the second is the blessed one. This is even more emphasized in the further comments about the children of Abraham:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Keep in mind the men of Babel said, "Let's go build a city"; whereas Abraham looked for God to bring him a city. He looked into the invisible, the spiritual, for help. It resulted in his being in this world a stranger, but he had hope in his heart. He looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. Later Jesus of Nazareth said: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). It will be the Kingdom of God.

Social Relations

Can you see the importance of knowing what God has planned that will guide men into His blessing?

The Bible reveals the mind of God but this is not done in so many words. It isn't so much memorizing a certain portion of Scripture that a person comes to know the mind of God. The Bible also reveals the mind of God by recording what He has done. The works of God do not so much tell man what he should do to please God, as they show man how things are, how man was made, what the situation is that he is facing, and how man is challenged to consider his ways, to think things out and to make his choice.

In Bible study I do not look to discover first a pattern of how things must be done, or a list of things that a man must do; but I will look to discover how things are made, why they are made, and what should be done because they are made as they are. Then it will be obvious that is the practical thing to do in view of the way things are made. For example, when I think of the fact that God is holy, and then I think that man is a sinner, that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, that He will condemn sin, that the man that sinneth shall die, it is quite clear to me that man is lost. Then I am able to appreciate when I read "but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans

5:8). God sent His Son into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Christ Jesus came not to condemn the world but through Him the world might be saved (John 3:17). I can now tell these things to people. That is exactly the way things are. Do you then have to argue with a man what he ought to do? That is the way he could be saved; and anybody who has any sense, who knows his right hand from his left, will want to be saved. This is the way. It is obvious from the very way things have been done under God.

Let us suppose you are face to face with a problem that is too big for you. You cannot handle it. God is great and Almighty. He can handle it. God will hear and answer prayer. If God will hear and answer prayer, and you need help, what should you do? You should pray! It is right there before you. That is the way the Bible deals with things. It shows you things as they are, what God has done, what He has made, and then the conclusion will be obvious there before us. "This is the will of God: walk you in it." When the Scriptures recorded that God did not want any man to be killed again as Abel had been killed, the Scriptures revealed the reason: "For in the image of God made he man." That is why God decreed that man was not to shed the blood of man.

When we study the Bible the significance of human beings is to be seen from a spiritual point of view. Men are what they are in the sight of God. Men are not what they seem to be to other human beings. They are not what we see when we look upon them as human beings. The believer in Christ looks upon people as they are in the sight of God. With this as a background in our minds to guide us in our thinking, let us look again at what happened at the tower of Babel. What can we learn as we look? One conclusion seems to be very simple: men working together as a group, depending on themselves, will fail. Look around in the world and see it over and over again. And why is this so? God will see to it. The Tower of Babel was a great project that was undertaken on what we would call the horizontal basis – man to man. Thus the tower was built, and it became a great big classic failure. It was, in the language of the street, "a big bust." It just did not work. Now what can we learn from it? It is obvious the attempt on the part of man to achieve security and satisfaction by his own human efforts will not succeed.

What happened at Babel emphasizes actually a very basic truth about human affairs. The fact is that corporate enterprise (by that I mean a group of people working together) depends for any kind of achievement upon conscious mutuality. Participants have to belong to each other. They have to know each other, and be able to talk back and forth, if they are ever going to do anything together. This conscious mutuality, this belonging to each other, is fostered by communication. They have to share with each other in communication and that proceeds in language. This brings us to the importance of language. And so we can understand how God is going to undo all this big plan of man. God prevents success at the very root of the enterprise in what He did to language. Men will not understand each other; they will not agree. Thus any joint effort will fail.

The actual capacity for language, the actual capacity for communication, the actual capacity for being mutual, for sharing and working on any kind of enterprise, is in man. That is the way God made him. God's plan for man involves the use of all these things. His plan involves the use of language, and of communication, and of working together as belonging to each other, and planning things. That is exactly the way in which things will be done. We can say that man will be secure in the social structure of his fellow-men, if his fellow-men work together in a common project like a city. Then the man and his property will be safe. He will be secure. Man will be satisfied in social fellowship with his equals. This is true about the nature of man. The fact that it does not work that way normally is because sin has blemished man and impaired his capacity.

The Kingdom of God in Christ is such a structure. The Kingdom of God in Christ is featured by social relationships where people deal with each other. These are sustained in what we would call social orientation. In other words, the way people deal with each other actually depends upon the way they look at each other, and that depends on the way they look at God. The importance of language points to the

Word of God as the means by which they can share in the life of God. What I have been saying is that when men are working together as a group depending on themselves only, they will fail. It is true men are supposed to work together, but God should be there working with them.

On the basis of what has been noted it can be understood that the attempt to achieve good social relations by men, trying to work things out so that people can get along together, man to man, on a human basis, without conscious cooperation with God, is unsound. That would be proceeding on a horizontal basis alone, and that is not practical. If you were to leave a plank of wood lying on the ground it would rot and decay. But if you raise that beam from the ground so that the air can get to it, it will last a long time. The Cross of Calvary has both a vertical upright and a crossbar, the horizontal. The horizontal is held in place by the vertical, which holds it up. When the vertical is omitted, the horizontal alone cannot be held up in the air – it will fall to the ground, where it will deteriorate.

Everything I have discussed was expressed in so many words in the New Testament by a great teacher among the Jews called Gamaliel. When the Jews were talking about what they should do with the apostles, Peter and John, Gamaliel uttered these famous words, "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel (what these men are preaching) or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it" (Acts 5:38-39).

Isn't that amazing? Gamaliel pointed out to them "if this thing be of men, it will come to nought." That is true to this present day. That is always true so far as human beings are concerned. If human beings are going to try and work things out together on their own human basis, one man with another, and leave God out, it won't work. When men gather themselves together to achieve formal unity on a horizontal basis, man to man, person to person; their effort actually produces strangers, foreigners, aliens. When man tries to achieve security and satisfaction by working for it himself, he is like a child trying to grasp a sunbeam. Can you picture a child standing near the sunlight in a room and seeing a spot of light on the table? He reaches out his hand to seize it. Can you see that if the child should open his hand and let the sunbeam shine in it, he would have it. The moment he tries to grasp it, by shutting his fist to hold it, he will actually be shutting it out.

That is the way it is with the blessing of God. We receive things from God not because we tried to do them, nor that we meant to force them, but because we were humbly willing to receive them. In social relations, man dealing with man, let us look up to find God's way of doing it, and then do it God's way. If we do it God's way, trusting in Him, He will bring it to pass. If we undertake to do it ourselves and push it, we will be disappointed, distressed and defeated.

Social Trouble – The Beginning

Do you realize that the most of any trouble a man has is caused by other people?

If a person wants to be blessed as he lives, there are two ways to act by way of gaining this blessing. One way is by our own efforts, when we try to do our best. The other is by receiving the blessing from Almighty God in response to our faith in Him. These two different approaches – one inadequate and the other glorious – are illustrated in the Old Testament by what happened in Genesis 11 and 12.

In the first case we have the story of the Tower of Babel. There we have a group of people getting together who want to do something they think will be useful to them. They try to get this done by their works. They intended to build a city. They were going to build a tower and make them a name lest they be scattered. The next chapter tells about Abraham. As a matter of fact, he not only receives the Word of God, but he is called to be alone. God tells him to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and

from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Genesis 12:1). We read in the book of Hebrews that Abraham "went out, not knowing whither he went," but we are told that he went out looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The men of Babel wanted a city, and Abraham wanted a city. The men of Babel were going to make themselves one; the man Abraham looked to God to give him one that God would build. We may say the men of Babel proceeded by what the Bible calls "works", while Abraham proceeded by what the Bible calls "faith." The men of Babel were going to build a city of their own, a city of men: Abraham looked for the city of God.

In this contrast we have pictured for us what the Bible speaks of as the kingdoms of men and the Kingdom of God. The interesting thing is that whereas in Babel a group of people started to work together, and what happened to them was that they were broken up, and scattered all over the earth. They lost the very thing they had been working for. Abraham on the other hand, the one man called out to be alone with God, was told "in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," so that he was led into communion. We can have some idea about the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham when we think of the day of Pentecost, when people from all the different nations came together, heard the Gospel preached, and received it.

Here is something for us to keep in mind. We are thinking about how men should deal with men, and how a man should go about his life, his daily work. We have seen here two different procedures. One of them: work things out the best you can: get other people together and seek to achieve something together. In the second procedure the man looks to God and depends upon Him. Abraham counted himself a stranger and a pilgrim in this world: he wandered about through this world, living in tents because he had no sure abiding place. He was perhaps the first "pilgrim" on record. Abraham followed as he was led until he could come into the very place God wanted him to be and find there an abiding place with God. The amazing truth is that in the first case a large group who started together finished by being scattered to the ends of the earth. In the second place, one man started alone, and yet through him and his seed all the nations of the world shall be blessed.

And now let us study further about people dealing with people. Notice what happens as we read in the book of Exodus. At the close of the book of Genesis you will remember that Jacob and his sons had gone down to Egypt where Joseph was the Prime Minister. Under Joseph's protection and sponsorship they had settled down in Egypt in a time of famine, and enjoyed the benefits of being there in a fine section of the country. The children of Jacob, who are now called the children of Israel, multiplied until there were large numbers of them.

At the time this family of Jacob was not called "Jews" nor were they as yet called "Israel." They were called "Hebrews" which means "foreigners." Actually the Hebrew word "Hebrew" means a man "from over yonder," from over the hill. In the opening chapters of Exodus there is recorded a classic case of trouble. We can call it "social trouble" since people were doing this to people. Israel was in Egypt. This meant there were two kinds of people in the land. There was a racial difference between these people, that was real and was involved in the origin of their trouble. Because of this social difference the Egyptians had the impression there was a potential threat to their security in these foreigners. This was a demonstration of the results of the Tower of Babel. These two races did not understand each other.

Lack of understanding generates fear. Fear arouses suspicion; and suspicion leads to hatred. Hatred leads to oppression; and oppression develops into cruelty. The population increased because the Hebrews had large families. This stirred up political pressure on the Egyptians. The Hebrews were successful in their occupations and this brought on economic rivalry with the Egyptians. This brought about cruel oppression of the minority. The Hebrews were sent out to make bricks, as the Egyptians forced labor upon them. The first provision that was made to deal with social problems was demonstrated when the first man and the first woman came to live together in one home. Each was to help the other: the one was to cleave

to the other. We called that mutuality. As long as people belong together in a mutual way they can work out their problems; but once mutuality is broken because of self-interest, so that one begins to think for himself regardless of others, social disorder occurs. Equality was there in that first social relationship in the home: the woman was to be "equal" to the man. In Egypt equality was denied in the attempt on the part of one group to establish that it was superior to the other. The Egyptians oppressed the Hebrews.

Was this sin? One might as well ask, "Is cancer a disease?" Of course it is! This condition developed on a horizontal basis, from man to man. At that time God sent to the Hebrews a man who would help them. We call him a prophet: a person who would interpret to them the situation they were in. The word "prophet" used in the Bible is very much like the word "preacher" used by us today. He is a man sent from God who will interpret to the people of God what the situation really is, and so this man came to help them. He was sent by God in compassion. The Bible says that God "raised up a deliverer" and sent him to them. This was Moses.

Moses went to his brethren and looked on their burdens. When he did this he saw injustices: he saw the Egyptians abusing the Hebrews. He also saw that the Hebrews did not get along together: there was fraternal strife among them. Hebrews quarrelling with Hebrews, and Egyptians oppressing Hebrews, show that things are working against mutuality. This amounts to trouble.

Social Trouble – The Solution

Can you understand that although trouble develops in this world among men, it can never be solved in this world?

We have been thinking about the different relationships which arise between men and men, as men deal with men. We call these "social affairs." We have in mind always that God is over all. We bring to our minds the thought that the Bible does not teach that God put man on earth and left him alone: God is interested in everything that happens to people. We shall now want to understand this as it applies to the emergence of social trouble.

By way of letting us understand this aspect of our study, let us consider this example. If a boy were, in a canal, floundering in the water and in danger of drowning, he would not be helped by someone coming along to give him advice, nor would he be helped by someone offering to give him a course in swimming lessons. He needs help right now from outside himself; he needs help from somebody on the shore. This is what we shall see as we look into the experience of human beings when they are in trouble.

When Israel was in the land of Egypt, between the Hebrews and the Egyptians there was a real difference. One of the reasons for trouble among men is the difference in men. When there is a difference and people become aware of it, they start comparing themselves with each other. Then envy enters in, and that develops hostility, which winds up with the strong oppressing the weak. When that happens it is just as natural as when you fall into the water and get wet, that there will be injustice and hardship. Real distress on the part of the Hebrews resulted from unreasonable injustice. Man's inhumanity to man is a notorious fact in the world. People deal with each other altogether unreasonably; and this had happened when the Hebrews were in Egypt.

Then God sent Moses, a man who had vision. He could see what the situation was, and we have the account of what he undertook to do. The story is short and simple:

"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second

day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well" (Exodus 2:11-15).

As I go over it slowly I want to point out to you what a student in the field of social science would see in this story. So far as Moses is concerned there was first critical appraisal. He studied the whole situation. Then there was a direct attempt to remove the cause of the trouble by eliminating the oppressing aggressor. When you see two people in conflict, and one is hurting the other, you would want to stop what is going on. This was what Moses did. In the course of trying to get that Egyptian to let that Hebrew go, he killed him. We don't know the details, but he was killed. This entailed the danger of reprisal. The next day when Moses saw two Hebrews quarrelling he made an attempt to end the conflict by appealing to them as brothers; but he found a rebellious reaction. The wrongdoer challenged Moses, discredited him, and implied that he knew Moses had killed the Egyptian the day before. Then Moses feared what might happen to him. The consequences of his efforts, in the first place to stop the injustice between the Egyptian and the Hebrew, resulted in the killing of the Egyptian; then the attempt to reconcile the two quarrelling Hebrews resulted in both of them turning on him. So the result of his efforts in trying to settle these affairs, man between man, on a human plane, amounted to a hostile reaction and Moses' withdrawal. Moses just had to run away.

Moses saw the truth in the social trouble. He knew it should not be that way. But when he tried to correct it from a horizontal, human approach he only aggravated the situation, disturbed the peace and endangered his own personal safety as the would-be helper. So we are obliged to reach this conclusion: solution of social trouble is not feasible in the setting where the trouble developed. The vision which Moses had, although it was true and essential, was not sufficient. The situation called for something else. There is a conclusion here we might profitably note: the right man trying to do the right thing in the wrong way will fail. This can be seen round about us any day and every day. If any do-gooder attempts to achieve what he has in mind by his own efforts he will fail.

There is no final solution of human problems on a human level. Direct dependence upon God, and cooperation with the living God are essential in dealing with human beings, who are doing wrong. When we have brought all this to our minds we can understand that the problem of the social trouble of the people of Israel in Egypt could only be solved by following God's way. This is the place where we should note a very important truth. It was when Moses came to help the Hebrews by trying to correct the Egyptians, he found himself in trouble. Trying to correct a wrong situation by stopping the wrong man leads into violent consequences. One obvious conclusion should never be forgotten: correcting Egypt is impossible.

This exposes one of the greatest problems encountered in dealing with human affairs today: there are people who can point out what would be right and they can point out what is wrong. And they can also identify the person who is causing the wrong. It is when they say: "Control him," that they lead the way into greater trouble. You cannot improve or correct the person who is willfully wrong. You cannot carve rotten wood.

Under the guidance of God, forty years later Moses led the people out. This is how he helped them to solve the problem of being in Egypt. This was done simply by leading them out of there. "You must be born again." Living directly in response to God's guidance, they would be able to have God's blessing. This can be recognized at once as the strategy of bringing them into the Kingdom of God. And this is spiritual living. This is not depending upon human considerations, and not depending upon the material situation nor the earthly conditions; but this is dealing with social trouble in the Lord from a spiritual point of view. In dealing with these people in social trouble, the way out of their situation was God's way.

Later we shall see that when Moses dealt with the problem of the quarrelling among the Hebrews,

he was able to solve that problem eventually by teaching them the Word of God: the Law of God. God showed him the Ten Words on Mount Sinai that were used to guide the people in dealing with each other. This revelation presented a different point of view with a different insight. It was from God and was effective.

We conclude that when we are thinking about the solution of social trouble, when we are thinking about people having trouble with people, and we feel there should not be such trouble since God made them all, we can remember that they belong to Him, and His help should be available to solve the problem causing the trouble. This is the spiritual point of view. The only way in which social trouble can be solved is to bring the people out of the natural into the spiritual. They must be born again so they can live in relationship with God. We can keep in mind "There is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus." Yes, in Christ the problem of social trouble can be solved.

The Law of Moses

If a person were living by faith in Jesus Christ, would such a person need to have any interest in the Ten commandments?

How should a man deal with a man in the sight of God? Living by faith does not change the operation of the law of God. Just because a man has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ it does not follow that the law of God is set aside: "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" will be true always. The Bible teaches a man what he should sow, but faith in Jesus Christ will result in God giving the man grace to enable him to sow the right thing.

We are studying the truth about the law of Moses as we look at the record of the Hebrews in Egypt, commonly spoken of as Israel in Egypt. They were involved in a situation that presented a social problem and, of course, the reason for the social problem was because the Hebrews and the Egyptians were different. As we look at that record we see that the solution of the problem was implicit – in the very nature of things.

The record shows that the attempt to make Egypt safe for the Hebrews was a failure. Moses tried to restrain the Egyptian so that he would do right by the Hebrew; this attempt resulted in Moses killing the Egyptian. That made it necessary for Moses to flee. When two Hebrews were quarrelling Moses attempted to get them to realize their brotherly relationship was such that they should not be quarrelling. But his efforts again proved to be a failure. He encountered their defiant refusal to accept that kind of guidance.

It was the problem of equality that aggravated the whole situation with the Egyptians. The fact that some were greater and some lesser, some bigger and some smaller, some had the power of being masters and were slaves, created the social problem. The account shows this was to be solved by reorientation; that is, the Hebrews were to move out of Egypt into Canaan. It should be noted the Hebrews never did come to the place of blessing in Egypt. You cannot change Egypt. The one thing to do with Egypt is to leave it, and that is the way with the human being living in this world. You cannot change the world, but you can leave the world. You can come out of the natural into the spiritual. So far as the Hebrews were concerned this involved the Passover and the Crossing of the Red Sea. The spiritual truth being illustrated is stated in John 3:3-8. "You must be born again." A person can never come to God the way he is naturally. The Lord Jesus Himself said to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world."

The problem of equality will never be settled in any natural way. You cannot make different people the same. The honest truth is always that people are different unless they are born again. It is when

they are born again in Christ Jesus that there will be no difference. The problem of conduct, as to how should a person act, was solved by guidance from above. When the Ten Words were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Law of Moses was given to a redeemed, rescued and delivered people. That law was not given so that Israel would know how to come to God; that law was given because Israel had come to God, and wanted to know now how to live. The Law of Moses was given to a committed people. This is not the way anyone turns to God; this is how a person will be guided after he has already turned to Him. The law was given to a cleansed, consecrated people. This is affirmed in Exodus 19:10. Again, the Law of Moses was given to a controlled, obedient people. The law was not given to disobedient, careless, wayward people to make them right. These people were yielded to God that He should guide them by enjoining upon them social consideration of others. This is what the law accomplished in the Old Testament; in the New Testament times since the Day of Pentecost, this is done better by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who will activate that guidance more effectively than the law ever could.

It is helpful to note some practical implications in the Law of Moses. First it may be noted there are complications of equity. If people are to have everything equal, and everything right, there will be difficulties. The law will direct that a person must give to others to be right. But no man is free to give all that he has. No doubt it would seem to be a simple matter if a person wanted to do the will of God, to just give away everything he has. But a righteous person cannot do that. There may be prior claims. No man possesses things alone. If a man is a father of a family and he has some money, that money is not really all his. Some of it belongs to the family, so he cannot give it all away. If a wife wants to be generous in giving certain things away, she is not free to give away everything she can lay her hands on. Some of what she has in her hands belongs to other members of the family as well. This is one of the complications.

No man has enough to give all that is needed. If a person started out to give to every poor person he meets, he would soon exhaust his supply. He would never have enough to be able to do it. This creates a problem. No man is free to give up rights and privileges which he holds jointly with others. If he is one of a group he cannot give up the rights and privileges of that group just because he feels like it. Suppose a man owns a house and yard. He naturally feels the front yard is his. Someone comes along with a truck that needs repairs, and asks the man if he can repair the truck in the front yard. Actually he does not have the right to let that man repair his truck in the yard and ruin the appearance of the whole neighborhood. That just won't do. Here is another case: someone has a backyard and thinks he has the right to put in it a pig pen. He will not be free to raise pigs there if he is living in town. He may not even be able to raise chickens. In other words, no man is free to exercise rights and privileges according to his own wishes, when he holds them jointly with others. All these instances are complications of equity: everybody is to have his fair share. That means nobody can do as he pleases.

The same principle has even wider implications. No man is free to give in to aggressors if in so doing he jeopardizes the welfare and fortunes of other people. A man may say, "Well, so far as I am concerned, he can drive across this yard if he wants to." But what about the neighbors? He does not have the right to give that permission at his own pleasure. This is another complication of fairness, of equity.

There are also implications of equality. Because of equality one man is as good as another in the sight of God. But it is right to show respect to your superiors, just as it is right to show charity to your inferiors. All of this is in the Law of Moses. The great principle involved is that no man lives to himself. One thing for me to know in my heart and mind is this: my conduct affects other people.

Justice

Since Christians teach from the Bible that God is gracious, merciful and a God of love, should one expect justice in His will for men?

The impression is often given when we study the Bible or talk about Christian matters that if love were operating this would take the place of justice. Is this true? For an understanding of this we will look into the Scriptures in the Old Testament to notice how justice was provided in the Law of Moses. The will of God is not indicated by imposition of God's ideas on men just because God arbitrarily wants to do it that way, but the will of God is to be seen in the very nature of things. God could make things any way He wanted to; and He made them His way. If we will humbly note how men are, we can understand better how men ought to do.

We raise the question at this time: how should men deal with men since men are as they are? We shall be guided in our understanding especially by the writings of Moses. Certain desirable conditions between man and man can be recognized. One elemental principle is "equality." This is implicit in the common origin. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). No matter how we may feel about other persons naturally, the truth of the matter is that God is no respecter of persons. When He made man He made them all. Another important principle we have noted in the creation of man we have called "mutuality." This term refers to the fact that there is something in a man that he holds in common with other men. He and others live and work together. Mutuality is implicit in common affairs and we want to say again, as we have quoted before, "No man liveth to himself alone." Living with other people is based upon this trait that I have called mutuality.

The Bible also allows for "variety." Men are different. This is noticeable in the common differences that are obvious among men. However you may describe it, the Bible recognizes that some are strong and some are weak. The Bible stresses plainly "The strong shall bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). That is Bible teaching.

Certain principles in practice can be discovered by looking into the Bible. It is plain in the Bible that "justice" is to be practiced. Justice is the social provision – the provision by people as a whole – for the right appraisal of any deed and when everybody agrees to give a man his dues. In connection with this the aggrieved, the person who has been hurt, is usually given the advantage.

Another principle that must be recognized is "equity." This is the social provision that will ensure right proportion in the distribution of mutual affairs. Everybody is to get his share. The weak are favored in the Bible. They are given a share even if they cannot work for it.

There is a third principle that must be recognized in practice and that is "charity." This is the social provision of right help for the needy. There are some people who are poor, and the Bible arranges that the needy and the poor are to be served. The word for this is charity.

There are certain elements in human conduct that can be noted when we look at the Bible revelation about men. The Bible recognizes that every human being who lives naturally in this world develops a self – an "ego"; and the Bible teaches about self that man should practice self-denial. In living in this world a man has to live with others; and the Bible teaches that the basic principle for dealing with other people is "consideration." Each person must give the other man his dues. He must treat the other man like a person, and give him consideration for what he is. Also the Bible recognizes that there are differences among people. Some persons have more, and some have less, some are smarter and some are slower, some are stronger and some are weaker. How can these different persons work together? "Charity" is the operative principle that the Bible reveals as effectual for getting along with different people. In every situation when differences are recognized, the Bible admonishes simply that the strong should take care of the weak.

There are now certain questions that should be faced. How is the practice of justice a demonstra-

tion of love? If God is a God of love, how does the Bible reveal that love is operating when justice is practiced? This will be done first of all by restraining in self-denial the natural impulse to vengeance. If I am dealing with another person who takes advantage of me, the natural impulse is for me to want to get even with him. I want to give him back more of the same that he gave me. But the Bible will restrain me in self-denial. The only way I can give up my chance to get even is for me to deny myself. In self-denial I control, restrain my natural impulse to vengeance. Then again, justice requires that in consideration of others the actual rights of the wrongdoer are protected. Justice treats everybody fairly and this is actually love in action.

When I exercise justice I must expect to give the wrong-doer the big advantage. If I treat everybody right, fair and square, how did the wrongdoer treat me? He did not treat me right; he was unfair but I must be fair. This is what the Bible teaches. The wrongdoer does not deserve it, but it must be done for him. The Bible will teach me this is the price of virtue. So if I am absolutely fair to everybody, I will be giving the criminal the big break. He was not fair when he hurt the other man against whom he committed the crime, but I must be fair to him. I do this in order to maintain righteousness.

Now is a good place to look at what is commonly called "The Golden Rule." Each man is to do unto others what he would have them to do unto him. This is not a way to get along, neither is this a way to get right with God. But if I am right with God this is how I would do. This is the guidance I would have and this is the measure I would take for righteous practice. I am to put myself in the other man's place and consider what I would think was the right thing that should be done to me, and then do it that way.

In a world where there is more need than my resources can possibly supply, where there are more people in need than I can take care of, and where popular practices are selfish and sinful, how can I as a believer in Christ ever know what I should do, or how I should do? And here I have my answer: by applying the Golden Rule. I am to put myself in the other man's place and ask myself what I would wish that people would do for me, then I am to do that for him. Some will say that I should follow the Golden Rule when anyone is in trouble. I should consider what I would want if I were in his place. Well, if I were in trouble I would not want half of what the other man has. I would want just enough to help me out. So this is what I should do.

And now let us consider a second question: how is the principle of equity maintained in judgments that recognize personal differences? The fact is people are different, and if I am going to act in righteousness toward them, I cannot treat them all alike. The principle of equity helps me to recognize a right proportion. For instance, if we agree that everybody should be clothed, it would not mean that all of the suits would be the same size, nor all the shoes are the same size.

In the same way, when we consider that every believer is to be filled with the grace of God, or filled with the Holy Spirit, this would not mean that each believer would have the same amount. Some people are pint size; some people are the size of a quart, and some people are the size of a gallon. Now to be "filled " would mean the believer would be full. In this sentence, "You shall be filled " the focus is on each individual. Each one is to be filled. However since individual needs vary; so must the meals vary. The food that I am to give to everybody will vary according to their needs. What would be food for a baby would not be food for a man. If I am going to give food to a person, I must look at the person and decide what to give. Because people are different, my conduct toward them will be different in all fairness.

Finally we raise the question: how is the principle of charity maintained in judgment that provides penalties for wrong-doers: for example, capital punishment? The punishment of the wrongdoer always has a social bearing. Society must protect the innocent, the victim. If I feel sorry for the criminal being punished, I must also be sorry for the person whom the criminal hurt, because he is a person, too. Enemies are real, and they are a threat to those who are under our care; we must protect those who depend upon us. "Religion" apart from social application, when I say I am getting right with God when I am not right with my fellowman, won't do. Social interest, trying to do right with other people apart from spiritual orienta-

tion, as with persons who always want to do right with their neighbors but who never think about getting right with God, that won't do either. Neither one of those are sound; as a matter of fact, they are both equally unsound.

Social Disorder in Isaiah's Time

Do you realize that when men sin against God so that they are without His grace, they begin to sin more and more in dealing with each other?

Man was not made in one special way by himself and then because there was another person, something was tacked on and he was told, "It would also be a good thing if you loved one another." Man was made as he is: not alone, but with others. It was put into his disposition and his constitution, that in order to live well he must be interested in other people.

One of the first things said about man in Scripture is a basic truth so far as all mankind is concerned: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God made man with a capacity to choose what he would do. Man does not have the privilege of determining what the end will be (God will take care of that), nor does man have the ability to guarantee that he is going to be able to carry out his ideas; but man can make his choice. The Scriptures record that Adam disobeyed God in seeking to please himself. In that way he broke the first commandment, which was "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Matthew 22:37). Adam, from the time of his disobedience when he had acted in a way that would please himself, was without help from God so far as his living was concerned. The Bible reveals "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The record shows that without help from God Cain began to hate his brother Abel: He finally killed him. This is the first instance we have of breaking the second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). Because of sin men wrong men. God revealed His will in His covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:6) that men should restrain men from hurting their fellowman.

Now let us consider this important question. How is the principle of charity maintained in judgments that provide penalties to wrongdoers? Many people wonder about that. If God is a God of love, how can He bring penalty upon a wrongdoer? We must remember penalties for the wrongdoer have a social bearing. In the administration of justice the penalty is for the deed, not for the person. It is what he has done wrong that is penalized. Sentences of condemnation prescribe certain penalties; these penalties are for the crime, not for the criminal. Penalties are not for punishment of the man; one day God will punish but it is not now. Penalties as prescribed in Scripture are not by way of vengeance; God is not trying to get even with the wrongdoer. Penalties are not for the rehabilitation of the wrongdoer. In our day there is a wide-spread idea that what our jails and penitentiaries and schools of correction should do, is to rehabilitate the wrongdoer. We always ask with reference to any such ideas, is the implicit purpose to help this man who has done wrong? Because that is not the point in the penalty. Primarily, it is the crime that is in mind.

Some years ago a man was charged with murder in a court in Winnipeg, Canada. His lawyer brought in evidence to prove that the man was psychologically unfit, that he had mental weaknesses. The judge excused the jury while he listened to the argument. The lawyers argued all day and the public wondered what the verdict would be. It was the first time on record that a large, full scale exercise of the legal profession was trying to get a man out of trouble, by arguing that he was mentally incompetent. Finally, the judge made his ruling. He pointed out the law does not outline whether anyone is sane or insane. The law is not about the man; the law is about the deed, what the man has done. A woman was killed in a way that indicated it was murder. The judge ruled that the one question for the jury to decide was: did this man

commit the deed, or did he not commit the deed? The penalty would be about the murder. That became standard process. I was studying law at the time, and this made a profound impression upon me. So far as the penalties in the Bible are concerned, they are against crimes in order to discourage other people committing such a crime.

If someone were to say about a particular penalty, "I don't think that will do that criminal any good," this would miss the point. The proper question would have been: is that penalty going to hinder somebody else from committing that crime? The purpose of the penalty is to protect the innocent and the weak. Prompt, adequate penalty for crime will discourage the repetition of that crime. In the case I just mentioned the judge made this ruling, "I don't know (the jury had not decided) whether this man committed this deed, but I will say this: the deed was murder and the man who committed it knew what he was doing. He ran away. When he ran away he showed he knew what he had done. The only thing I want to hear from the jury is: did this man do it or did he not do it?" The man did it; and because he was in Canada at that time, he was hanged.

I have never forgotten that interpretation of the law. The penalty is for the crime to discourage other people, so as to protect the innocent and the weak. It will not be for us to ask, "Will this penalty change this criminal?" The question to ask is, "Will this penalty discourage anyone else from committing a crime of this sort?"

With reference to our discussion of justice let us keep this in mind: religion (by that I mean a man's relationship with God) without social interest (without being interested in other people) is unsound. Many people will agree with that; but we should keep in mind that social interest without religion, without a relationship with God, is unsound. We do not want our society to go either one of those two inadequate ways.

The Bible will tell you that in thinking about God, you can do right by your fellow man. Because sin is deceitful, man can be foolishly unaware of the results and the effects of sin. Because of this it is easy in our culture to think that the wrong deed is only that. It was the wrong thing to do and the wrongdoer is sorry, but that is the way it is. This is not adequate. The wrong deed entails something: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Committing sin, doing wrong, opens the door for consequences. Many do not realize that sin brings consequences. That is the reason why there were prophets in the old times, and; why there are preachers today. The prophet would preach: he would interpret the law of God (what God wanted man to do), and the meaning of sin (what should happen when man did not keep the law of God).

Isaiah was a prophet, and he interpreted the distress of his people as the consequence of sin. In the opening chapters of Isaiah there is a description of the condition of Israel at that time. In the third chapter there are two major predictions: government shall deteriorate. What I mean by that is: the government of the people will go bad when the people sin. competent leaders will be lacking. People who have real ability won't take government jobs, they don't want them. The result will be that incompetent, immature persons will rule. That will hurt everybody and will lead to confusion. Social disorder and confusion will prevail. The wise people will not lead in those days because of the sin in the land. Incompetent leaders will cause error and confusion. The result will be oppression of the poor; and that is an offence to God. That was the first big idea in Isaiah's prophecy. The second idea in this same context was that social standards, how people live with people, would deteriorate. People would go bad.

The deterioration in social living was set forth in detail. The vanity of women was to be seen in their ornate attire. In the third chapter of Isaiah, it is astonishing to see how the Bible describes in detail that the women dressed in those days in fashions that were extreme, way out. Such immodest dress is always a mark of deterioration, of things going bad, in society. The strength of men will be dissipated, they will become weak. Polygamy would actually be sought by women. They would actually encourage it. Cleansing judgment from God would be necessary before there could be any blessing in Israel.

So Isaiah, in his day and time, pointed out how things were going, "Your government, your rulers will be poor, will be inadequate, will be incompetent, and the people will suffer and the poor will be hurt." Social standards would deteriorate and people would spoil under these conditions when sin is rampant. Throughout the first five chapters of Isaiah it is clearly revealed that such social conditions will bring the judgment of God.

Isaiah has been taken as one of the prophets to demonstrate how the message of the prophets uniformly reveals that social consequences will always follow violation of the Second Commandment.

Practical Implications in the Biblical View

Since God is no respecter of persons, does the Bible teach that all men are alike?

Our interest is in the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The meaning of this commandment was set forth by Jesus of Nazareth in His teaching, when He was asked once "Who is my neighbor?" In reply He told the parable of the good Samaritan. You will remember what happened as the Samaritan saw the man in the ditch by the side of the road. Was he influenced by what he thought of that man personally? Not at all. He did not know him. What influenced him was the fact that the man was in need. The Samaritan had compassion upon him in his need.

A basic consideration, which we can all have in mind in dealing with everybody, everywhere, is that every man is a creature of God. Therefore, my attitude toward him ought to be on that level. God made that person, and God sent His Son to die for that person. If I can in any way witness to that person to win him, that would be the will of God for me. God would want me to remember that so far as that person is concerned, whoever he may be, "in the image of God made He man." But men are different and thereby hangs the tale.

So far as I am concerned there are three classes of people with whom I have to do: those who are in authority over me; those who are my equals; those who are below my level of advantage, the poor. I deal with these constantly. I should show respect towards those who are in authority over me. I should show esteem toward those who are my equals. I should show charity toward those who are at a disadvantage. Charity to the poor will involve many things. Ordinarily, when there are strong and weak people, the strong person is tempted naturally to push himself. Charity to the poor involves curbing the natural aggression of the strong. Then again, charity to the poor involves sharing the natural wealth of the fortunate.

Some persons are more fortunate. Some are fortunate. Then there are some who are unfortunate. It is the will of God that I share what I have with others according to their needs. Charity to the poor will spare the natural destruction of the guilty. In the course of people dealing with people wrong is sometimes done. When wrong is done to man that is a crime. The man who does it is a criminal. Ordinarily speaking, naturally speaking, what the righteous people would do to the criminal would be to blot him out. The natural disposition of those who have done that which is right, toward those who have done that which is wrong, would be to wipe them out, but charity will spare the natural destruction of the guilty. However, all three classes: the people who are strong and need to be curbed, the people who are fortunate and need to share their goods, and the people who are innocent and need to spare the guilty, are to receive equitable consideration.

In the case of crime when we speak of charity we usually think about the person who has done wrong, the person who is guilty. Individual differences as we have noted emerge in various forms. They can be seen everywhere. Where there is injustice, there are always two persons: the aggressor who is

doing wrong, and the victim. Where there is poverty, there are always two classes of people: the rich folks and the poor folks. Where there is industry you have two classes of people: the master, or foreman, and the worker, or servant. When you are thinking of money you have two classes of people: the creditor, the man who lends the money, and the debtor, the man who owes the money. Even in sex you have two classes of people: male and female. In any society you have two classes of people: the member of society and the stranger to the group. In crime you have two classes of people: the criminal and the victim.

Individual differences in actual affairs cause different people. All of this can be briefly generalized. There are people who are strong and those who are weak: and the Scriptures reveal that God has a message about that. How shall people live together when some are strong and some are weak? We often sin against the second commandment with reference to our servants. That person may be a servant but that person is also my neighbor, my responsibility.

The Scriptures will tell me what to do with my servant. I am to treat my servant as if that servant were Jesus of Nazareth. I can feel some of you shrinking back and saying, "I could never do that." But think it over. Because "if you do it to the least of these you have done it unto me." That means if I handed them even a cup of water I would have handed it to the Lord Jesus Christ. If I mistreat my servant, I mistreat the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord did not hesitate to put Himself right there with those people. With reference to my servant: the maid, the yard worker, the porter; "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

It is the easiest thing in the world for me to forget about the person who is working for me, but God does not forget. I am to treat that person as if I were dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ. God Almighty sees this. The Bible does not say that person is as good as I am. He may be and he may be even better but that is not the point. The Bible does not say he is as well off as I am. I may be far better off than he. The Bible does not say that person knows as much as I do. That person may be ignorant. But I need to remember that person who is working for me was created by God in the image of God. I should stop in my tracks. That person is entitled to my consideration and my charity in God's eyes. I should also remember that if a man is deaf to the cry of the poor, God will not hear him, He will turn His back. This is tremendously important.

The next group we want to consider is women. Some may say, "I don't see why you would think that women are in great need." This is not an intelligent comment. By and large over the whole world women are treated as being less than men. This may not be so in my family, nor in my town, but in the world by and large, far more than is admitted, this is true. Normally, the woman gets the short end of the stick. Women are taken advantage of and commonly speaking, they suffer in a special way from this sin against the second commandment. God sees it. God made woman in His own image too. She is entitled to consideration.

Another group that should be remembered is strangers. God has a special interest in strangers. He was a stranger Himself. Thus there are persons in special classes that should be specially thought about when we deal with differences in people, because they suffer in a special way from sins against the second commandment. We must ask the Lord Himself to help us in our outlook upon people that we may move humbly and obediently in His will to consider the other person, and love our neighbor as we want ourselves to be loved.

Social Aspect of the Old Testament

Can you see that the reason why the Bible reveals the Second Great Commandment is because God made man as he is?

The Gospel does not impose any strange arbitrary rules or requirements; the Gospel only reveals what the truth is in God's purpose in creation. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," not because there is something about the neighbor that is essentially attractive, and not because I want to earn something, or become something big, but because he is as he is and I am as I am. That is the way we were made. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is involved in the plan of creation in the very course of things.

We have been noting that a big part of the trouble arises in the fact that people are different. Because they are different, they act differently. Because they act differently, we have all kinds of experiences with them. In these experiences we note certain tendencies that can be recognized. In the sight of God, these tendencies are evil, just as for man they are destructive. For instance, there is the tendency towards vengeance. When anybody does me wrong, it is natural that I want to get even. If anybody does something wrong to me, I want to pay him back. This is the essence of hostility. Some folks will not like me, and they will show this by not wanting to have anything to do with me. They are against anything I am involved in, and this causes separation and many other evils.

Another tendency that can be seen in people is greed, when each person reaches and grabs to get for himself. Such action complicates the situation and among human beings as they live in this world such interests can be identified. They will be found everywhere.

In society as a whole, all men are responsible to cherish and to protect certain interests, for example, life itself. Life is natural, every human being has it, and it should be protected. This is what is at fault in slavery. Life is interfered with. This is also what is involved in murder, when life is arbitrarily ended. This is what is involved in calamity, when life is endangered. All men are responsible for each other in the matter of protecting the life of anyone, everyone.

Another such natural interest is property: what a man owns. This raises a sense of responsibility on the part of everybody. There is also the matter of welfare, when we are interested in how other people are getting along. This shows up in relation to government. When we respect the government of a community we are really respecting the group as a whole. This common respect for others shows up in activity undertaken in the protection of the weak, the helpless and even the unborn. The Bible teaches us this is the right thing to do. Human beings should protect those who are innocent and who are helpless. We should also provide aid, succor and remedy to help those who are in trouble. We should provide guidance if they are confused. All this is set forth in the Old Testament revelation.

I have listed these three interests among people for which all human beings are responsible: life, property and welfare. This involves certain practical implications that are obvious. So far as self is concerned, the operative principle is denial. There is never anything else to do with self except to deny it. With reference to the perspective of others, the operative principle is consideration. Any person should consider other people. From the point of view of differences, because people are not alike and are different, the operative principle is charity. All the way through in dealing with people, "the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves." This is not because it is nice, nor because it would be a sweet thing to do, but because of the way we are made. Man was planned that way. We have been noticing in this connection that this is what is revealed in the Scripture. In everything that we have been considering we have been following what the Bible teaches us, largely in the Old Testament, because we are interested in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

There are many aspects of living that are significant. First, there is the matter of individuality. Each person counts. The single person is the unit of mankind. When the Son of Man became incarnate, He took on the form of man: a single person. It is the one person who is going to be saved, and it is the one person who must be born again. The second great commandment concerns the single person, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The English pronoun "thou" means one person. "Thy neighbor" is the neighbor of one person, and "thyself" is one person. So the second great commandment concerns the individual as a unit. The entire spiritual experience in the Gospel develops on the basis of "thou", referring to God, and

"me", referring to man.

Another aspect we should review is equality. We do not have to try to establish equality: it is there. God made men of one blood, "all nations of men on the face of the earth." This is the way God made man. God is no respecter of persons. There will be other people, but each is equal to the other. This does not mean each is even alike, but each is equal to the other in privilege and in opportunity and in freedom. This is well illustrated in the game of baseball. There are nine players to each team and a batting order is posted. These players cannot all go to bat at the same time, so they take their turn at bat. The man at bat may be no good, but he gets his turn. There are different assignments: one plays first base, one pitches, another catches, others play in the outfield, but when they go to bat each one takes his turn to do what he can. Even so each person is responsible to God, who is no respecter of persons. This does not mean that all will be treated the same, because not all will act the same. Each one will have the consequences of his behavior: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. God is going to be fair to him and in the administration of God's justice and charity, He will have no favorites.

Let us look again at the principle called "mutuality." The Scriptures at the very outset recorded that God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Man was created in such a way that he would need others, he was not made to be alone. The simplest form of this relationship to others is in marriage. The simplest and most elementary institution where this takes place is in the home. This has profound implications. "A helper equal to him" brings out two ideas. In the relationship between man and man, others are to help. They may lead if they are helping as they lead; they may follow if they are helping as they follow; they may collaborate if they are helping as they collaborate; they may cooperate if they are helping as they cooperate: but each individual still has his assignment. That is the first idea.

The second idea is that each is equal to the other. The English word "meet" means "equal to": the one meets the other on a level. When woman was created a part of Adam was taken from his side. Someone has well said: not from his head that she should boss him, nor from his feet that he should walk on her, but from his side that they should be together. In this new mutual relationship priority is given to mutuality rather than to original individuality. An infant is an individual, and it is infantile to reach out for things on one's own, that is, like a baby. That is imperfect and inadequate. Actually, the baby is dependent upon others but he doesn't know it. In his ignorance he develops his ego, but when he is drawn in love to another, he will freely, gladly give all he has to that other one whom he loves. When these two are together, each is safer, more secure and better off.

This is the way man is made and, finally, as we are thinking about these matters, we need to recognize variety. Men are different. These differences result in some having advantage and some having disadvantage. The Lord said "the poor you have always with you." There will always be times when people are poor, and "the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves." Oftentimes, strong persons should lead and weak persons should follow. We cannot have leaders among men if we do not have followers. It has been said with reference to the weak or common people: the Lord must have loved the common people, He made so many of them. This challenges our humility and our responsibility and our charity.