

INTRODUCTION: One of the most common criticisms of ~~the~~ Christian churches is that "Christians are no different from anyone else."

Some professing Christians even go out of their way to try to prove that they are just like everyone else, in order to avoid embarrassing anyone who might be disturbed by his own life & habits.

During the Civil War in the USA there were, in the border states, some people who tried to be on both sides. They kept two flags.

When the Southern army came along they would run out the Confederate flag; then when the Northern army came along and they thought they were going to be in town some time, they would pull in the Southern flag and run out the Union flag.

Do you know that those people suffered more than any other people?

The Southern army would strip them of everything they had, and if they hid anything from the Southern army, when the Union army came along again, it would strip them of everything.

Both armies detested them.

So we detest a character who claims to be on both sides of the question of salvation.

We like to have men one thing or the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon.

You cannot have two masters in this matter.

Jesus said "He that is not for me is against me."

Jesus made it perfectly clear that a new life, a different life,

results from a man's new relationship to God  
when he enters the Kingdom.

A reconciled man simply is not the same man he has been.

A regenerated person is different.

One who has been spiritually re-born from above is a new creation in Christ.

The new birth leads to new life.

A man's life is no longer the same when he takes upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom.

(over)

## II. Eternal life, or everlasting Life, in the Gospel.

A. Rich young ruler - MK. 10:16; MR. 10:17; LK. 18:25  
"what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

B. The Judgment of the nations

Mt. 25:46; "the righteous shall go into eternal life."

\*C. In John's gospel:

1. 3:16... "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

2. 5:24... "He that beareth my words has everlasting life."

3. 6:47... "He that believeth on me has everlasting life."

4. 5:29... "Search the scriptures, for in them you have eternal life."

5. 6:54... "He who drinks my blood has eternal life."

6. 10:28... "I give unto my sheep eternal life & they shall never perish."

7. 12:3... "this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and J. C. whom thou hast sent."

## I. THE NATURE OF THE NEW LIFE

### A. Not a new "law"

1. Jesus opposed legalism

2. He brought something new,

a new wine that could not be stored in old wineskins,

a new cloth that could not be patched on old clothes.

### B. Not just a system of ethics

1. The teaching of Jesus begins,

not with moral laws or ethical principles,

but with a complete transformation of character.

2. A man does not obey because he ought to,

or because it is REASONABLE to obey;

He obeys because he has become a new being,

a new person who WANTS to live the kind of life

God wants him to live.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW LIFE

### A. Living according to the will of God

1. The Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done."

2. Mt. 7:21-23, "Not every one who SAYS to me,  
"Lord, Lord", shall enter the kingdom of heaven,  
but he who DOES the will of my Father."

3. In Gethsemane Jesus prayed: "Not my will,  
but thine, be done."

This is the dominant prayer of the Christian.

4. But it is not always easy to know the will of God  
in a given situation.

a. The Word of God helps

b. Prayer helps

c. The inner guidance of the Holy Spirit helps.

e. The Counsel of wise, mature Christian friends helps.

B. Jesus made his teaching more specific when he said  
that the will of God is for man to "LOVE".

1. The first & greatest commandment. Mk. 12:29-31

2. Not merely a physical love (eros)

or mere friendship or brotherly love (philia)

but a creative, unselfish, universal, unconditional,  
and DIVINE LOVE, (agape)

3. How can we discover & express the meaning of this kind of love?

\* This is what the New Life is all about.

a. Story of three year old Debbie sucking her thumb.

Her father said, "Debbie, sweetheart,  
I don't understand why a big girl like you  
has to suck her thumb all the time."

Instantly she flashed back,  
"Well, you be Debbie and I'll be Daddy,  
and then you'll understand."

b. When we really love others, as God commands us,  
we in a sense "become" the other person  
long enough to feel his needs & frustrations,  
and then we become ourselves again to minister  
with compassion learned from Christ.

C. Jesus taught in detail the specific ways in which love  
for God & man works itself out in daily life.

This love leads to certain acts & attitudes.

1. The attitude of HUMILITY.

Hear what John Ruskin said about humility:

"I believe the first test of a truly great man  
is his humility. I do not mean by humility  
doubt of his own powers, or hesitation of speaking  
his opinions; but a right understanding of the relation  
between what he can do and say and the rest of the  
world's doings and sayings. All great men not only  
know their business, but usually know that they know it,  
and are not only right in their main opinions,  
but they usually know that they are right in them;  
only they do not think much of themselves on that account.  
Arnolfo knows that he can build a good cathedral dome  
at Florence; Albert Duerer writes calmly to one who has  
found fault with his work, "It cannot be done better";  
Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem  
or two that would have puzzled anybody else;  
only they do not expect their fellow men therefore  
to fall down and worship them. They have a curious  
undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the power  
is not IN them, but THROUGH them, that they could not be  
or do anything else than God made them, and they see  
something divine and God-made in every other man they meet,  
and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful."

2. Sincerity in contrast to hypocrisy

3. Compassion or SERVICE TO OTHERS

4. FORGIVENESS IN contrast to hatred & retaliation.

Once years ago a young pianist was giving concerts in the provinces of Germany, and, to add to her renoun,

she announced herself as a pupil of the celebrated Liszt. Arriving at a small provincial town, she announced the concert in the usual way; she was astonished and terrified when she saw among the new arrivals at the hotel the name of "M. L'Abbe Liszt"! What could she do?

Her false advertisement would be discovered, and she could never dare to give another concert. In her despair she adopted the wisest course, and went direct to the Abbe himself.

Pale, trembling, and deeply moved, she faced the great maestro to confess her fraud, and to implore his forgiveness.

She threw herself at his feet,

her face bathed in tears, and told him the story of her life.

Left an orphan when very young,

and having nothing but her musical gifts, she had tried to shelter herself under the protection of his great name.

This seemed to be the only <sup>way</sup> to overcome the many obstacles which opposed her.

Without that she would have been nothing--nobody.

She asked if he could ever forgive her?

"Come, come", said the great artist,

helping her to rise,

"We shall see what we can do. Here is a piano.

Let me hear a piece intended for the concert to-morrow."

She obeyed and played, at first timidly,

then with all the enthusiasm of reviving hopes.

The maestro stood near her, gave her some advice,

suggested some improvements,

and when she had finished her piece, said kindly --

"Now, my child, I have given you a music lesson.

You are a pupil of Liszt."

While she was still speechless, he added,

"Are the programmes printed?" -- "Not yet, sir."

"Then let them add to your programme that you will be assisted by your master, and that the last piece will be played by the Abbe Liszt."

5. Courage

6. Detachment from material things.

### III. THE NEW LIFE IN

#### III. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. (Mt. chs 5-7)

- A. A summary of the ethical teachings of Jesus, but not a complete summary of all the teachings of Xt.
- B. It sets forth the ideal life of those who have been reconciled to God and are living in obedience to His will.

C. It pre-supposes 2 things:

- 1. The reign of God as the supreme expression of God's purpose for man, and
- 2. Reconciliation (or Regeneration) as the experience by which a man accepts that reign.

D. All other religions and philosophical ethics are handed down in the forms of laws or principles of conduct.

Jesus is unique in that he placed his emphasis first of all upon a fundamental inner change, a change of character.

He did not offer a new system of ethics but a whole new approach to ethics.

E. The uniqueness of this new approach to ethics explains why the Sermon on the Mount appears so radical, so impossible, at first, and then becomes so practical.

G.K. Chesterton once remarked that the Sermon on the Mt. "turns everything upside down, but later you discover that

it turns everything right side up."

This is true because we have been living in a topsy-turvy world of our own making.

When we experience a new birth

and begin to live a new life, then we enter into a world of God's making where there is peace & joy that pass all human understanding.

This is all illustrated in a way by the story of a man who bought a farm and found on it an old pump.

He went to the pump and began to pump.

A neighbor came up and said,

"Look here, my friend, you mustn't use that water.

The man who used to live here years ago used that water and it poisoned him and his wife and his children."

"Is that so?" said the man.

"Well, I will soon take care of that."

And he went and got some paint,

and <sup>had</sup> puttied up all the holes,

and filled all the cracks and leaks,

and painted the pump;

and soon he had a fine looking pump.

He said, "Now I'm sure it's all right."

-- You would say, "What a fool,

to go and paint the pump, when the water is bad!"

But that is what people today do who

try to meet the spiritual needs of their life

merely by following noble ethical teachings --

whether they be the teachings of Jesus

in the Sermon on the Mount or the Golden Rule,

or the teachings of Ghandi, Budda, Mohammed,

or any of the world's philosophers.

They are trying to paint the pump

when the water is bad.

What they need is a new well.

Make the fountain good,

and the stream will be good.

Instead of making resolutions to paint up your life  
on the outside,

ask God to give you a new heart

and make you a new person.

Then will you find the peace that

passes all understanding.

(over)

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This kind of New Life can be produced only by a dramatic change ~~of life~~ like that which took place in the life of John Newton, whose epitaph read: John Newton, Clerk, Once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa,

was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy."

No wonder he could write:

"In evil long I took delight, Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
and stopped my wild career:  
I saw one hanging on a Tree in agonies and blood,  
Why fix'd His languid eyes on me,  
As near His Cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with his death,  
Though not a word He spoke;  
My conscience felt and owned the guilt,  
and plunged me in despair;  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave, which said,  
"I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayest live."