

## Sunday School Lesson

December 7, 1947

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### CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

#### Lesson: Third John

Golden Text: I thank God . . . for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:3-5

The lesson today consists of a personal letter written by the Apostle John to Gaius. It is uncertain who Gaius was, but it is clear that he was a consistent christian and worthy of the Apostle's affection.

#### BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." While christians love all men, yet there is a different kind and degree of love for those who are of the family of God. There is a law that says—"things equal to the same thing are equal to one another." Thus those who love God will love one another. It is not stated definitely that Gaius is John's convert, but John speaks of him as one of his children which is a strong implication. We are reminded of a similar statement by the Apostle Paul where he said—"For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord." There is nothing more gratifying than to return to former fields of labor and find converts who have stood true to Jesus. This loyalty to Jesus or loyalty to the truth is the only basis for christian fellowship.

#### MEASURE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."

There is a great blessing in doing work for the Lord. There were travelling evangelists in those days as now and to care for them would make it possible for the gospel message to get to the people. In the day that rewards are given those who have sacrificed to care for the preacher will receive their corresponding reward. It is significant to note that strangers as well as acquaintances are included in this fellowship. It is a gracious benevolence to care for the needs of our friends, but we should also give attention to the stranger. Often times the latter is overlooked in the church and the opportunity of helping some needy soul may be gone forever. Let us always welcome the stranger to our church and to our home. To cherish only the friendship of certain people savors of selfishness.

#### LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." In the latter part of John's letter he mentions two men that are entirely different in character. "Diotrephes who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." Occasionally we meet people today who wish to be the "steering committee" and yet when it comes to actual work and sacrifice they are not to be found. Over against this infamous character we have Demetrius who "hath good report of all men." These two men represent two antagonistic forces in the world—evil and good. In this case both are found in the borders of the christian church. It matters not where this evil force is found it is always the same. Christian people are forever admonished to follow not that which is evil. Here we have the limit of christian fellowship.

#### LOYALTY UNDER PERSECUTION

##### Lesson: Revelation 2:8-11; 7:9-17

Golden Text: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.  
Revelation 2:10

In the Book of Revelation Jesus is revealed, eternal and exalted, with the keys of the world to come. To John it was said—"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be here-

after." Thus the book of Revelation comprises the past, the present and the future.

#### THE CHRISTIAN TESTED

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich)." Their works at Smyrna were motivated by a holy ambition. They were not popular with the world because they suffered tribulation from it. They were not hoarding their money for they were suffering poverty. While all this was true they were enjoying spiritual riches. These seven churches in Revelation represent the church of all time. In contrast with the church at Smyrna is the church at Laodicea. The latter is rich and increased with goods, but at the same time is poor and blind and naked. Of spiritual or material wealth, the former always excels the latter. We sometimes wonder why so many good people are poor, why Jesus Himself was born in poverty. One possible answer is that poverty makes for sole dependence upon God. Few are they who have riches and do not trust in them. Such is the danger that God trusts very few people with a surplus over current needs. Being poor, the church trusted in God and was rich; being rich the church at Laodicea trusted in themselves and was poor. Tribulation and poverty are tests but through grace we can overcome.

#### THE CHRISTIAN OVERCOMING

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Chapter six of Revelation begins the opening of the seven seals. They are opened by Christ, and most of them represent judgments that are to come on the earth. The persons referred to in the text have the righteousness of Christ wrought in them by the merit of his blood and the power of his Spirit. There is nothing that will expose the moral strength or weakness of a person like tribulation. Therefore it is natural that tribulation and whiteness of character should be listed side by side. Tribulation does not generally leave a person as they are found. Either we are better or worse as a result. Thank God for christians who will suffer being exposed to the tempter's power and still retain a faithful testimony.

#### THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARD

"They shall hunger no more"—perfect supply. "The Lamb shall lead them"—perfect guidance. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"—perfect happiness. During this life we have continual contradiction and opposition. In the visible church or out of it the principle is the same. At the time of this writing a great many people of the world are in sorrow and trouble. A few have found a source of comfort in Christ, but with many, added days and months seem only to agitate their griefs and increase their sorrow. We who know Christ look forward to the time and place when sorrow and tears will be forever forgotten. In the meantime let us do all we can to bring salvation to our fellow men.

#### SOUL REST

The cry for soul rest is universal. "I saw," said Brother Hodgkin, "a man of wealth on a raft in the Ganges, sacred river of India, eagerly drinking the water of that filthy stream from his cupped hand. Nearby floated the dead body of a man, a few feet away a dead dog. He seemed unaware of either. He hoped with the drinking of the sacred water to find the rest his soul craved."

Oh, men and women of America, what privileges are ours to know "The Way of Peace"—the answer to the quest for rest! What will our Lord say to us?

"It shall be more tolerable for" \* \* \* the land of India \* \* \* than for thee, America."

—Selected.

The truest greatness puts the people first. Ambition does just the opposite.

## LETTERS FROM OUR PASTORS

Centreville, N. B.

Dear Highway Friends:

I would like to express through The Highway, my deep gratitude to the people of God who prayed for my recovery when I was in a serious condition.

Several months ago I was suddenly stricken with appendicitis and was immediately taken to the hospital for an operation. For a few days I seemed to make good recovery but I began to bleed internally and nothing apparently could check it. Realizing my plight I sent out a call for prayer. In a few hours a sudden change came over me; what I felt cannot be described. Waves of heavenly bliss rolled over my being, and I knew that the healing power of God had touched me. I learned afterwards that a number of God's people, when they heard of my condition, immediately went to prayer with a burden for me.

Shortly after arriving home from the hospital I began to bleed outwardly. I called for a few of the brethren, who prayed and anointed me according to James 5:19. I was now in a very serious condition, suffering intensely from nausea, shock and weakness. The enemy assailed me with every conceivable doubt and fear, but I held on to the Lord, and shortly the assurance came that He would bring me through. He showed me just how He would do it; that I would be taken to the Fort Fairfield Hospital and given a transfusion and would show marked improvement, all in that day. That is exactly how it happened. Around midnight, five hours after the transfusion, I suddenly regained consciousness and began to improve in a marvelous way. I do praise the dear Lord for delivering me from so great a trouble.

We have recently dedicated the new church at Knoxford. The hand of the Lord has been upon this undertaking from the very beginning. It is a commodious, fully equipped and up-to-date building, fully adequate to meet the needs of the praying band in every way.

It is a privilege and pleasure to minister to this large constituency. We have been on this field four and a half years and there hasn't been a hitch or jar. The blessing of the Lord has been upon us. We are hopeful for the future. If God be for us He is greater than all they that can be against us.

May the blessing of the Lord be upon all the readers of The Highway.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

H. M. KIMBALL

#### ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

"Do all to the glory of God" means the transformation of each daily act from insignificance to majesty. It puts an end to such stupid thoughts as "Is life worth living?" or "A man has no chance in this town." It opens a window toward greatness in the smallest room of life.

—Young People.

#### WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?

This is a question which has been asked by all kinds of people since the Word of God was given in written form. Skeptics and infidels have asked it; honest doubters have asked it; and sincere believers have requested information concerning it.