

I BELIEVE IN FORGIVENESS OF SINS

(Apostles' Creed Series)

By Claude A. Ries

To multitudes of men and women, life today is only a burden. To them life is like an unbearable, suffocating day in mid-summer. It is oppressively hot. The ground is dry and parched. The atmosphere is sultry and growing still more hot. There is no escaping the scorching sun and the burning heat. Such is the picture of many, many lives today.

But a little dark cloud forms along the western horizon. The ever-widening cloud moves swiftly, the lightnings flash, the thunders roar and the torrents of cooling rain bring relief and refreshment to man, beast and vegetation.

Like this refreshing shower to that hot oppressive summer day come the exhilarating words of Jesus in the oppressiveness of man's sinful night, "Son be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee."

Forgiveness of our sins by God, brings man into adjustment with God. You have heard of the little boys who ask the old gentleman with the long beard, where he put it at night. The question so bothered the man that night, that he didn't sleep the whole night through, for he put it inside and then outside the covers, until he didn't know where it belonged. A lack of adjustment!

To have normality of life there must be harmony with oneself, with men and with God. Listen: "and behold they brought to Jesus a man sick of the palsy . . . and Jesus seeing their faith said to the sick of the palsy, 'Son, be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee.'"

Two things happened to this man. His body came into harmony with the physical laws of life. And just as this is the first instance that Jesus pronounced his words, "Be of good cheer" to anyone, so the first condition of genuine good cheer in the life of anyone is the forgiveness of his sins.

There is a place to me more dear
That native vale or mountain,
A place for which affection's tear
Springs grateful from its fountain.

'Tis not where kindred spirits bound
Though that were almost heaven
But where I first my Saviour found
And felt my sins forgiven.

"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God," a peace that puts us in tune with the Infinite.

Yes, I do "believe in the forgiveness of sins."

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

By Roy S. Nicholson

Question: Please explain the difference between "righteous indignation" and "carnal anger."

Answer: There are various descriptions of "indignation" and "anger" as well as varied definitions of them. But your qualifying words "righteous" and "carnal" give some indication that you have been discriminating in your expressions and that the question is a sincere one. Take your Bible and run the references under "anger," "indignation," and "wrath" in order to get a clearer picture of the whole meaning of these words. You will discover that there is both divine wrath, anger and indignation as well as human anger, wrath and indignation. You will also see what produced these dispositions in Deity and what produced them in man. That ought to be a help toward the solution of your problem of the difference between them.

Let us look at the dictionary, as well as the Bible, for the meaning of words is very important; and we need to be certain that our use of them is according to the standard meaning they have; otherwise we shall be subjected to serious misunderstanding, and we may appear misleading in our teachings. "Anger" is described as "a violent, vindictive passion; sudden and strong displeasure; wrath; ire. Anger is sharp, sudden, and like all violent passions, necessarily brief." "Carnal" is defined as "pertaining to the fleshly nature; brutish; worldly—not spiritual." Therefore, "carnal anger" is that violent and vindictive passion, provoked by sudden and strong displeasure at something done to, or said about some thing or some one in whom there was an interest. It is apt to manifest itself by impatience, rage, a furious and hasty word or deed which will be regretted upon serious reflection; or by some attitude that is exasperating and revengeful. It is the very opposite of love; therefore "carnal anger" has no place in the Christian's heart and life. Such breaks connection between the soul and God, and fellowship between man and his brother.

By "righteous indignation" we understand, according to the dictionary, that impersonal and unselfish displeasure at unworthy acts; that is, just resentment toward a thing which was wrong, because it was wrong. For it to be "righteous" it must conform in disposition and conduct to the divine standard of right and justice. It must be upright, virtuous, and morally right, equitable and just. That will prevent its doing or saying anything undeserved by the thing toward which it is indignant. Its attitude is the correct one, no other would be consistent and justifiable. Righteous indignation is more concerned with the personality engaged in it. Righteous indignation is manifested toward the thing that was done or said, because it was the wrong thing; and not because of who said it. Anything it does or says in connection with the incident is good, innocent, just, moral and virtuous; or it ceases to be "righteous indignation."

A judge, charging a jury which was to bring in a verdict on a serious case, remarked at the distressing "loss of capacity for moral indignation." By that he meant that the tendency was to become complacent and indifferent toward moral wrong. Man, as a Christian citizen, must not lose that capacity; but he must exercise it "righteously." The difference between "carnal anger" and "righteous indignation" involves the difference between two motives, two sources of emotions and feelings, two causes, two reactions, and two purposes.

Regardless of what others may do or say, you will have to determine in the light of the Holy Spirit's dealing with your own heart whether your reactions are "righteous" or "carnal"; but by the grace of God you may be kept from carnal anger, what ever the provocation.

WE PASTORS EXPECT

By S. BOND HARLAN

We hear, and read, much about what is expected of a pastor by his conference and church folk. So, it is no more than right that we express that which we pastors have a right to expect. This is being written after talking with a number of pastors of our own denomination as well as many of other denominations.

We expect our Conference to stand behind us as long as we are producing. Too often the

older men, men who have, and still are producing, are shoved onto the "hard-scrabble" charges or placed on the shelf to make room for younger men. It often happens that men from other denominations are brought in, placed on good charges, and in a year or two both the man and church are lost to the denomination.

We expect the church members to be as spiritual and Christ-like as they expect their pastor to be. We know the pastor is the shepherd of the flock, but nonchurch folk look at, and judge Christianity from the decorum of the sheep. Many a stranger and unsaved person has been shocked at the irreverence exhibited by the church folk in the house of God. To mention a few acts of irreverence; gum chewing, note writing, whispering, shooting paper wads. It is not always the children who are guilty of irreverence, and lacking in spirituality.

We expect the church folk to be ON TIME for services. On the occasion of the conference president's visit to a certain church, the pastor had the usual handful who were on time sing four hymns in succession. A look of puzzlement appeared on the face of the president's wife, so the pastor's wife explained by saying, "We sing them to church here." The children are gotten ready for school on time; and the worker is at the place of business on time. Surely the pastor has a right to expect his congregation to be in their place at the church service and on time. What would happen if the pastor habitually came to service about fifteen or twenty minutes late? A few years ago a man made this remark, "You can tell they are Wesleyan's as they are always late."

We pastors have a right to expect FINANCIAL SUPPORT. All who read their Bible know that it says: "The labourer is worthy of his hire." When finance is mentioned we are often told to "trust God." We do, but it would be foolish to drive into a gas station and tell the attendant, "I trust God, so fill it up." The preacher's car is often the "community taxi"—no charge—and folk fail to realize that it takes just as much gas, oil, wear and tear, license, insurance and repairs to keep the pastor's car going as it does their own. Eighty-five percent of the average rural pastor's driving is done in carrying on the work of the charge. Then, a few months ago at a W. Y. P. S. convention, one of the young people in a round-table discussion of the pastor, said, "Every pastor should have three or four good suits." And they expect the pastor's family to be well dressed too. Can we do it without proper remuneration? Remember, the things which the pastor has to buy has increased in price the same as that which you buy.

We pastors expect the church folk to be FRIENDLY and not isolate the pastor's family. In the rural communities, many of the folk are related in one way or another. They usually own their own homes and have their friends. The pastor moves in among strangers, stays a few years and then moves again. His family are sociable beings and like to have folk drop in at the parsonage for a social call. Try it and really get acquainted with your pastor and family.

There is much more that could be said, but the ordinary pastor will be satisfied if these expectations are met.

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kinville, N. Y.