

LESSON XI. CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

September 15, 1900.

(Gal. 2:17-21.)

“But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God; for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for naught.”

It is useless to think of learning this lesson if the previous ones have been neglected. The verses that immediately precede, which we studied in lesson 9, must stand out as clearly in our minds, and as ready to hand, as does the alphabet or the multiplication table. Besides reviewing from the first verse of the first chapter, give special attention to all that precedes in this chapter. So indelibly must everything be impressed on our mind, that when we have finished the book we can take the whole of it in at a single glance, just as with one glance, even with our mind's eye, we can see every feature of a landscape with which we have long been familiar. A few questions both in review of what we have passed over, and on the present lesson, may help to this result.

QUESTIONS.

To what noted incident does Paul refer in this chapter?

Relate the circumstances of this visit to Jerusalem.

What was the question under consideration?

What was Paul's experience at the meeting?

Who spoke heartily in favor of the truth of the Gospel, as held by Paul?

Where did Paul and Barnabas go after the conference closed?

Who followed them later?

What did Paul do when Peter came to Antioch?

Why did he so sharply reprove him?

What did he say to him?

Why had they, though Jews, believed in Christ?

By what are we made righteous?

But if, while we seek righteousness through Christ, we are found to be sinners, is that a part of the Christian life?

“God forbid.” Literally, “By no means.”

What things are destroyed in Christ?

Who alone is responsible if the body of sin, once destroyed, rises again?

What has happened to us through the law?

Why are we dead to the law?

What is the manner of our death with Christ?

What wonderful thing occurs when we are crucified with Christ?

Whose life is it, however, that is manifested in us?

How, then, do we live the new life day by day?

“By the faith of the Son of God.”

What has He done for us?

Whom did He love? For whom did He give Himself?

What do we not do when we receive the life of righteousness through the faith of Christ?

What would be the case if righteousness came by the law?

Then what do we do if we seek to be made righteous by our own obedience to the law?

NOTES

1. In verse 16 we should follow the common version rather than the revision, although the latter, as a general thing, is better. It is perfectly true that we are justified by faith *in Christ*; but the stronger term “justified by *the faith of Christ*,” expresses much more, and is really more true to the Greek text. Christ trusted in the Father. Ps. 22:8, 19; Isa. 50:7-9. In giving us Himself, He gives us His faith. Therefore, the same means and the same power that kept Christ righteous make and keep us righteous, when through faith in Him we fully accept Him.
2. Christ is “the Holy and Righteous One.” Acts 3:14. “He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. Therefore it is impossible that He should impart sin to anybody. In the stream of life that flows from the heart of Christ, there is no trace of impurity. It is impossible that He should be the minister of sin, that is, that He should minister sin to any one. If in any who seek righteousness through Him, or who have actually found it, there appears sin, it is because they have dammed up the stream and allowed it to become stagnant,--they have not kept the channel open so that the water of life could flow freely. The Fountain is pure, but the purest water becomes corrupt if, after it has left its source, it is confined.
3. Sin is that which we destroy through faith in Christ. Being crucified with Him, the body of sin is destroyed. Rom. 6:1-6. Sin is of the devil, and Christ was manifested “that He might destroy the works of the devil.” That which the faith of Christ destroys will show itself active as soon as that faith is lacking; and in that case, we are the ones who are responsible for the upbuilding of sin, because we do not “keep . . . the faith of Jesus.”
4. The law which condemns, also kills. The law condemns all, therefore it will kill all; but each one has his choice as to how and when he will die. He may either die willingly, and now, or he may have his life taken from him at the last day. If in Christ we now willingly allow the law to take our life,--yielding it up even as Christ did,--then so long as we remain in Christ, we are dead to the law, and at the last day it will have no

occasion to take our life. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Jer. 50:20. "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." Compare Rom. 6:11, 12.

5. Whether we read, "I *am crucified* with Christ," or "I *have been crucified*," does not make much difference, since the perfect tense reaches down to the present moment. The crucifixion of Christ is, therefore, a continuous process, even as is the living with Him. The cross can never be separated from the Christian, nor the Christian from the cross; and whoever understands it will not desire that it should be, but will say, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
6. There is only "one faith" (Eph. 4:5), namely, "the faith of Jesus Christ." When we become new creatures, so that it is no more we who live, but Christ who lives in us, the faith of Jesus will be found to be strong enough to subdue all the wickedness, even of our sinful flesh.
7. What a glorious thought--He loved "*me*" and gave Himself for "*me*"! When you repeat these words, let the pronoun "*me*" have its full force. Do not think of Paul or of anybody else except yourself and Christ. It was true of Paul, but it is equally true of everybody else; but each one may leave everybody else out of the question, and may have the unspeakable joy of the thought--He loved *me*, and singled me out from the world.

"Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be,
Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!"

8. "But I am not worthy of the love of Jesus," some one will say. That has nothing whatever to do with the matter; He loves you, nevertheless. "Love is of God," and is as eternal and unchangeable as He is. No reason can be given for the existence of love; it *is*, and that is all that can be said of it. If one could state just the reason why he loves another, that would show that he had not true love; for what he calls love would cease if the conditions were changed; whereas, true love never ceases nor changes. It is useless to try to explain why God loves us, except by the fact that He is love. Let us rejoice that He loves us "with an everlasting love," and that His own boundless, unselfish, unchangeable love will be shed abroad in our hearts if we receive the Holy Spirit.
9. If men could do the things that the law requires, and, over and above all that, make up for the failures of the past, there would have been no necessity for Christ to die. His death would have been a vain thing. Whoever, therefore, seeks to be justified by the law, that is, by his own obedience to it, seeks to prove that it was useless for Christ to give Himself. Let us take heed not to frustrate the grace of God.