



## **Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day**

### **6. The Gracious Christian**

The commandments shed light on our being the "light of the world".

A young man, a professed Christian, went into an automobile agency to look at new cars. The owner, a busy man, spent two hours of his valuable time conversing with this young man. All this time the young man was bargaining the owner down in price. When finally it was evident that the owner could not afford to come down further in price, the young man shrugged his shoulders and stated that he could obtain a similar car at fleet price!

Instead of frankly laying the facts before the agency owner in the first place and graciously allowing that he possibly could not meet this price to the purchaser of a single car, the young man took the owner's valuable time. Then by scoffing at him for not finding it appropriate to grant him the fleet price, the young man reflected anything but the principles of true Christianity.

The automobile agency owner was the husband of a fine Christian woman. Later the owner was taken to a Christian hospital for surgery. As he was recovering, a friend went to the administrator of the hospital, a deeply sincere and dedicated businessman, and suggested this would be a good time to invite this automobile agency owner to unite in fellowship with the church family of which his wife was already a member. He had even accompanied his wife to church and had seemed to enjoy its services. Warmly the hospital administrator extended an invitation to the fellowship of his wife's church family.

The owner respected the administrator of the hospital who extended the invitation. But he was offended because one person in that church family had come into his establishment and thoughtlessly, selfishly, consumed two hours of his valuable time.

Now, were the agency owner already a Christian, he might have looked beyond the inconsistency of the one church member and thought of all the unselfish and thoughtful members of the church. But evidently he himself had not found a love relationship with Jesus Christ. Had the member of the flock who had been so thoughtless of the businessman, studied the generous, unselfish attitude of the Master, he would have approached the owner of the agency in an altogether different attitude. This Christ like attitude could have had an influence on leading the businessman to Christ.

If we have ever unconsciously followed that young man's thoughtlessness in business, let us remember that Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This message comes ringing down through the ages.

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To be a Christian in name only without the holy life is to have the sign but not the substance of the sanctified life. How the evil one must rejoice when a "Christian" descends to such business methods. Many an unbeliever will stumble over the life of one inconsistent "Christian."

There are tens of thousands of dedicated, unselfish, generous Christians who would revolt at the thoughtless attitude of that young man's taking the time of the businessman and then marching off in a scoffing attitude. Yet how often has one lone professed Christian placed a dark blot on a church full of generous, unselfish children of our Lord.

We have observed a beautiful thoughtfulness on the part of thousands of believers who attend our annual camp meetings. They deeply appreciate the tent or room provided by the ministers who act as servants during that ten-day period. These people stand before the reception desk or the locating booth and are assigned a cabin, a tent, or a room, ordered beforehand. Maybe a leg on a table is loose. Perhaps not all in their tent is in the best order, yet they are most patient and understanding.

They know that their ministers have left their own churches and have become "errand boys" during the ten-day period. They have labored long and faithfully to have every room and every tent in the best order possible. But since ministers are not always camp specialists, something is often overlooked.

At one of our camp meetings the one in charge of location placed a huge sign up next to the locating booth. He painted in letters a foot high these words of Scripture, "HERE IS THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS." What a commentary on the kindness of those who were so thoughtful, and a hint to the thoughtless, selfish few!

In one church located out in the country where we conducted a series of meetings I decided to publish an apology. On the announcement and invitation to attend our meetings we placed in large print "WE APOLOGIZE." On the brochure we asked the forgiveness of any to whom we had failed to represent the love, the kindness, and the unselfishness of our Lord. Our Lord teaches us that it is not a sign of weakness to apologize. He says. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16.

Instead of this humble attitude having a negative effect it was blessed of God. The promise that "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14) was fulfilled during that series. Among the guests who attended that series of meetings was a gentleman who had years before been a member of that particular church. But through some misunderstanding he had let his membership lapse. For years he had never entered the door of the church.

At the sight of that announcement, however, he felt impressed to return at least for that one series of meetings. He could not resist responding to that printed apology. Before the week was over he sought for an interview with us. He said that he would like to return to the fold, stating that the beginning of this desire was when he saw that humble apology appearing on the brochure.

"I decided to come to the meetings," he said, "and see if you actually meant what you said." And he added, "I request baptism and to be reinstated in the fellowship of the church."

The Lord Jesus made clear that there are tares among the wheat, meaning that there will be unworthy ones in the church. It does not change the fact, however, that the field in which the

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wheat is growing is God's field. The wheat is still God's wheat. But He makes it clear in this parable that there will always be the insincere and the sincere, the hypocrite and the genuine, the thoughtless and the thoughtful. They will be going to church together.

Some whom we think in our humanness to be tares are only immature wheat. They need to "grow in grace." Our Lord makes very clear also that no man is to judge which are tares and which are immature wheat. Mistakes and sins are committed. But He said, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers. Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew 13:30; 40-43.

How we wish that every Christian in our fellowship were 100 percent sincere. But the Master informs us that this will never be until the end of the world. Therefore, how important that everyone keep "looking unto Jesus." God's promise is. "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Isaiah 45:22.

If someone were to ask, How could a person who deals dishonestly be anything but a tare? let us not forget that even if he is a tare at the moment, there is the possibility of his yet receiving the new birth.

Again if we are led to wonder how slothful business can be engaged in by an apparently sincere person, we think there is an answer. Many individuals who are truly sincere have never been taught the importance of careful business dealing. Some also misunderstand an agreement they have had with another Christian. And when this misunderstanding surfaces there is a tendency under the stress of emotion for us to believe our brother is not completely honest.

We know of one way by which many misunderstandings between fellow Christians and others can be avoided, it is by having a written agreement.

### **Great Bible Facts:**

1. Christ says to all of His true followers, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).
2. Wherein Christians have failed so to do we should confess our faults. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.
3. God wants us to "grow in grace. and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).
4. We are to look, not to the hypocrites in the church, but to Jesus our Saviour. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22.
5. For those who have failed to do right but who repent, God promises to "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19).