

# *Bryan Station Baptist Church*

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## THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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*"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"*

# HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY OR CHRIST, PRIORITY

C. D. Cole

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12.

"...And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it..." Matthew 10:34-42.

Human responsibility to God is a solemn matter, but the fact of it should not surprise us. A world without a moral lawgiver would be a world without meaning. There is an innate fear, in the human heart, of a Supreme Being. This accounts for the universality of religion. This is why people of all lands have some sort of religion--some way to dispel their fears. A man who professed to be an atheist, who denied the existence of any Supreme Being to whom he must give account, was asked if he ever told a lie. He admitted he had, and then he was asked how he felt. He admitted that he felt a sense of uneasiness or dread of something. Now that feeling was the testimony of conscience to the fact that

there is One with whom we have to do, and to whom we must give account.

I want to speak of the Christians responsibility to God in Christ Jesus. I think there is evident effort on the part of many professing Christians to ignore, at least, any serious responsibility to Jesus Christ. I think it needs no great argument to convince ourselves that responsibility to God is not taken as seriously as is responsibility to human government. We are hearing a lot today about subversives in human government--men who are bent on wrecking our present form of government. But what about subversives in the kingdom of God--in the realm of Christian profession? Is everybody loyal to Christ who claims to belong to Him? Is everybody loyal to Christ as we are to our country? Are we willing to give our time and money to promote what our country is engaged in, and at the same time do nothing to promote the interest of Christ and His church? Is what our country doing more important than what our Lord is doing on earth. Is drop-

ping bombs to kill men more important than sending the Gospel to save man? We are to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, but we are to render unto God the things that are God's. Let me urge all of us to compare for a moment our loyalty to men and human institutions with our loyalty to Christ and His Church. How does our obedience to Christ compare with our obedience to man? Do we ever stay away from church one hour because we feel bad and then go to work eight hours when we feel just as bad? Is listening to God's word a weariness when listening to a ball game or a prize fight a pleasure? In the days of Malachi, God dared the Jews to offer to the governor of the land what they were offering to Him. They had lost all respect for God and yet wanted to argue with Him about the matter. I wonder if some today in this neck of the woods have not lost respect for God and His word, and yet try to put the blame on the preacher or somebody else.

During World War II the word priority was on the lips of many. Because so many articles were scarce, one had to get a priority, and if he could get a certain slip of paper it would entitle him to purchase ahead of others who would have to wait. It meant you would be first or before others.

I want us to think about our relation to Jesus Christ. Is anybody amazed when I say we should put Him first? His claims should have our priority, His claims on us should have preference, and only as we are properly related to Him are we properly related to one another or to anybody.

The Roman world gave priority to military might--they put emphasis on the sword--and fell.

Greece gave priority to philosophy--to human wisdom--to education, and the Gospel was foolishness to them. But the foolishness of God--what the Greeks thought was foolishness--was wiser than man, and Greece went the way of nations. The rich fool gave priority to piling up riches and lifted up his eyes in hell. And many today give priority to business--business of making money--and have no time for Christ and His claims. Others give priority to their children, and ignore what Christ said about son or daughter more than Him.

Christ should be our priority because we were His priority. He put our eternal welfare above His own temporal comfort and went to the cross to be punished for our sins.

Many people have claims on us: parents, children, neighbor, country, etc. And these claims will be enforced if we try to ignore them. That is the purpose of all human laws--to make us treat one another right.

But Christ has prior claims on all of us. His claims rightly have priority over all others. He does not enforce His claims at least in the present. He urges His claims upon us in His word, but does not enforce them by physical means. We must voluntarily make him our priority. It is my duty as your pastor to press His claims upon you. I must teach you to observe all the commandments--that is, teach you to keep or do what he has commanded. Word for observe is translated keep 57 times and observe only four times.

I must teach you to do what He has commanded, but I cannot and must not try to force you to do them. If you do not want to honor Him with your life I cannot make you and would not if I could by any threat of force. The church needs your help, but it must be loving help--it must be service with a smile. If anybody deserves service with a smile it is our Lord. Christ wants our love to constrain us--He wants service from the heart. And it is not service with intent if it is not voluntarily from the heart. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

fore I am not responsible to read it or listen to it." Or, "I don't get any blessing from my pastor's ministry, therefore, I am not under obligation to hear him." All such excuses, you ought to be shocked at having such thoughts. You ought to turn the fire of criticism upon yourself.

You ask, "Should I do something I do not want to do?" I answer "Yes" with emphasis. You ought to do right whether you want to or not, The fact is you will not do right unless you want to. But not wanting to will not help you escape the responsibility.

I do a lot of things I do not want to do, but love for my Lord and respect for His authority causes me to do it. Let me imagine, for a moment, I am only a laymen. I have no official duty in the church. I only attend to hear and worship. Now, I can imagine that there would be times when as a matter of physical comfort, I would prefer to stay at home in robe and slippers. From the physical standpoint I do not want to go to church. But out of love and respect for my Lord I go. Or, I might

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Now let me call attention to something all of us need to consider. We are not escaping responsibility by thinking or saying something like this: "Well, I don't have to support the church with my presence and purse, and because I can't do these things out of love, I am not responsible to do them." I do not love to read the Bible and hear it preached, there-

not want to go as a matter of edification. I might feel the pastor would be dull and uninteresting and from that standpoint, I would rather listen to a better sermon over the radio. But that would not relieve me of the responsibility to do what Christ has commanded about assembling with the saints. In the matter of giving I might prefer to spend all I

Matthew 5:12, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

It says in Luke 6:22: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

Christians do not receive their reward down here. We have to go right against the current of the world. We may be unpopular, and we may go right against many of our personal friends if we live godly in Christ Jesus; and at the same time, if we are persecuted for the Master's sake, we will have this joy bubbling up; it just comes right up in our hearts all the while--a joy that is unceasing--that flows right on. The world cannot choke that fountain. If we have Christ in the heart, by and by the reward will come.

Today let's "count it all joy" if we are mistreated or misrepresented for Christ's sake. In doing so, others may see Jesus in us.

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Ephesians 1:7.

Does that make any appeal to you? How would you feel towards a man who gave his own life to save you from physical death? I'm afraid it just doesn't get hold of us what Christ has done for us at Calvary. We do not seem to know what it is all about. What he has done does not seem to register.

III. The right of conquest. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." Luke 11:21.

A MOTHER'S BEATITUDES

*Blessed is the mother who understands her child, for she shall inherit a kingdom of memories.*

*Blessed is the mother who knows how to comfort, for she shall possess a child's devotion.*

*Blessed is the mother who guides by the path of righteousness, for she shall be proud of her children.*

*Blessed is the mother who is never shocked, for she shall receive and know confidence and security.*

*Blessed is the mother who teaches respect, for she shall be respected.*

*Blessed is the mother who emphasizes the good and minimizes the bad, for her children shall follow her example.*

*Blessed is the mother who answers questions honestly, for she shall always be trusted.*

*Blessed is the mother who treats her children as she would like to be treated, for her home shall always be filled with happiness.*

make on myself and family--there are a lot of comforts my tithes and offerings would afford--and so as a matter of physical comforts I prefer not to give to my church. But these objections are overcome and out of love for my Lord, I deny myself certain physical comforts to please preached here might be so unpopular that those who support it might lay themselves open to ridicule and unjury, and so when I consult my safety and reputation I would rather not get into trouble. But out of love for my Lord, I support that which is unpopular.

If we go on the principle that one is not responsible to do what he does not want to do--not responsible to do right unless he wants to do right, you have closed the doors to all commands of Christ and exhortations of his ministers. Exhortation is needed because people do not want to do all they should do.

If we go on the principle that there is no obligation where there is no desire, then the way of salvation would be to become so wicked that there would be no desire to do right.

Some of the grounds of Christ's claims upon us:

I. The right of creation. He has claims upon us because He made us. If you make something on your own time, you have a pretty good claim to it. And nobody can rightly take it from you. Christ is our Creator and has all the claims of a Creator.

II. The right of redemption.

A. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Galatians 3:13.

B. He Redeemed us by His blood. "In whom we have

If you are not willing to do something for the first time, you will not be a successful leader.

Don't close the door behind you because you may want to get back someday.

Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy. -- Howard W. Newton

