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**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON**  
OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD  
LESSON: Romans 8:12-17, 31-39  
by Rev. E. C. Todd

In the preceding lessons of this quarter we have dealt with the importance of belief or doctrine, and the important individual and social consequences that follow upon our beliefs either for good or for evil, depending upon our doctrine of God and our doctrine of Man. Last week we dealt with the doctrine of God. This week we have a lesson which asks the question: "What is man, and what is his relationship to God?"

The Scriptural witness is that man is made in the image of God—His child—but there has been a defacement of the image, a corruption of the nature, an estrangement in the Father-child relationship, caused by Sin, which may be described variously as disobedience to the law of God, rebellion against God, self-centredness, on the part of man. There is sin against goodness—lying, stealing, sensuality, injustice, uncharitableness. There is sin against truth—crooked thinking, prejudice, idleness. There is sin against beauty—the degradation of men and men's talents. Sin has an individual and a collective expression. There is a mass of collective evil for which not one individual alone but many people acting together are responsible. Yet each individual must stand on his own feet, and be responsible in the sight of God. Sin sets man at variance with God. It estranges him from God; it estranges him from his fellows as well. It brings upon him "the judgment and wrath of God so that he lives in a world of confusion and distress, and is unable of himself to fulfil God's high purpose for him."

The Gospel Christianity brings to the world is good news to sinners. The good news of the grace of God. God does not help himself where man cannot help himself. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," in the way the Scriptures put it. Christ bears our sins and gives us an assurance of the forgiveness and love of God. The corrupt nature is made of a new creature in Christ Jesus. The disobedience is forgiven; the rebellious heart is conquered; as submission is made. Self-centred Man is made God-centred Man. The Father-Child relationship is restored; the estrangement becomes reconciliation. Atone-ment is made for sin. In Christ Jesus you who were once afar off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:13). God makes the believer "live together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross." (Col. 2:13,14). "On the cross Jesus bore the burden of sin and he broke its power; and what he did there moves men to repentance, conveys forgiveness, undoes the estrangement, and binds them to himself in a new loyalty. "By his resurrection and exaltation Christ stands victorious over death and all evil, and he fills those who commit themselves to him with such grace and strength that in him they, too, are conquerors." (Statement of Faith, the United Church of Canada).

But, what must sinful man do to make reconciliation effective? "To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption. (The Shorter Catechism). The grace of God is available. Man can only receive it by faith. We do not pay for it but receive it as a gift. And a moral consequence follows upon the appropriation of God's grace. Redemption is effectively applied to the believer by the Holy Spirit, and the consequence is a life lived in fellowship with God, a life of love which is the fulfilment of the law. "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

The reconciliation of Man to God and God to Man is variously described by St. Paul. Sometimes he uses the legal term "justification," meaning that God pronounces the sinner of acquittal instead of condemnation. At other times, he speaks of Man being a "new creature" or a "new creation". Yet again, Man has "passed from death unto life, because he loves the brethren." And yet again, it is a passage from slavery to freedom. In the text prescribed for this lesson the term "Adoption" is used. Man in an unredeemed state is a child of God away from the family of God. (see the parable of the Prodigal Son). Man in a redeemed state is a man restored to sonship. He is adopted into God's redeemed family, the Church. And it is the Spirit of God working in the human heart which gives the sense of sonship, "the Spirit himself (bearing) witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16). The relationship with God into which the Christian believer comes then, is that of a son to a father, the exact relationship which exists between God and His Christ. The Christian becomes a joint-heir with Christ. (Rom. 8:17).

The relationship is abiding so long as the believer's faith keeps him united to Christ, suffering with him that he may be glorified with him. "I live," said St. Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me... and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave

**FEEDING THE BIRDS**  
by H. L. Hest

I know of no more interesting hobby for man or woman, to really put in a good time at these dull winter days than feeding the winter birds. The great majority of our birds go south for the winter, but there are a score or more that stay for the winter and take a pot luck with what they can find or what is given them by kind friends.

Among our most interesting winter residents are the active little chickadees who are particularly fond of some suet or fat meat. Then there are the sociable little juncos, trim, neat little fellows, sometimes called black snow birds. The juncos are a fine contrast in light below and dark above and both male and female show a pair of white tail feathers when they fly.

One of our most attractive winter birds is the bluejay—a big, husky fellow with no respect for any other bird at the feeding board, for he crowds in and gets his share, and it is no small share for he will gobble down big grains of corn like a hen. Probably the most attractive birds at our table are the cardinal grosbeaks. The male is a brilliant cardinal colour while the female shows many dark feathers in her plumage. These are the well behaved birds at the table and we usually refer to them as "the little gentleman and little lady."

Of course there are always plenty of English sparrows and an occasional starling, and we have three song sparrows staying with us, but they are holding their songs for spring, when the males attract their mates and entertain them when they are brooding their young. A chipping sparrow has also shown up. Later on we are looking for the white-throat and white-crowned and probably a fox sparrow or two.

Our biggest thrill so far has been entertaining a flock of seven ring-necked pheasants. They were rather shy at first but are now gaining confidence, and feed with an eye open for trouble, regardless of the fact the law protects them with a heavy fine for any one molesting them.

Our bird feed is made of a mixture of corn, wheat, sunflowers grown especially for them, and wild vetch we get from a friendly farmer. This is a small oily seed greatly relished by the juncos and other small birds.

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**50 - 50 CLUB MEET**

The Club met last week at the Baptist Church where they attended the Week of Prayer Service. The business part of the meeting was to have been held at the home of the new 1948 presidents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Whitmes, but owing to the illness of their children, the new secretaries, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jones opened their home to the club.

Frank Whitmes took the chair but soon found this honour a figure of speech, when he got little chance to sit until lunch was served.

The main item of business was a vote to change the constitution which passed with the necessary majority — meetings in future to be held monthly instead of bi-monthly as in the past.

The rest of the time allotted to business was used in discussions of possible projects and undertakings to discover what type of meetings the club desired this year. Frank asked each member in turn what they would like best for future meetings. Two of these suggestions were immediately approved, a sleigh ride to be held on the next meeting date, Feb. 4th with Mr. and Mrs. Howard Wrigglesworth and Mr. and Mrs. Reg Broomhead as convener, and a birthday party to be arranged for some future date by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Evans, and Mr. and Mrs. Hap Grosu.

It was also decided that a percentage of future meetings would be held in the Church.

Lunch was served by the convener and Mr. Todd closed the meeting with the benediction.

himself for me." Suffering, adversity, persecution, these things are unable to cancel the relationship between God and redeemed Man, for in all these things, Man is more than conqueror over evil through the great conquest of evil, Christ made, through the Great Conqueror Himself.

The moral consequences of this relationship both in the individual and the social and economic order should be apparent. For here is a doctrine of Man more realistic than any other ever promulgated; and at the same time, more hopeful. Redeemed Man is no pawn of the State, no plaything of tyrants; neither is he to be the subject of Capitalism's economic exploitation. He who is made for fellowship with God, and who bears his image, has a freedom above all license; he who was made to be a joint-heir with the Son of God has a dignity above all pride. He was made for the liberty of the sons of God, and the fraternity of the sons of God.



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