

is a declarative sentence and not an imperative.)

b) There is no respect of persons with the Lord.

- b. Masters. 4:1. Provision is the vital thought here. Masters are not to withhold that which is just and equitable for their servants. Their standard of operation is their own Master in heaven!

Conclusion

This third chapter of Colossians has laid the boom down upon careless Christian living. The ground for it all is the high position in Christ (vv. 1-4). When action is taken in line with this position (vv. 5-14), one can enter into his rich possessions in the Lord (vv. 15-17). These, in turn, will affect the structural living in the home; and in employment relationships (vv. 18 - 4:1). Thus, this chapter has carefully laid the ground for Christian dynamic conduct to glorify the Lord. This is not a Utopia (a place that is not), but a Eutopio (a place which is happy). If you desire to experience the reality of these blessed truths, you must submit to Him Who died for you. Do that now!

Notes

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"Homely Instructions"

Col. 3:18-4:1

Introduction

1. The Christian home is one of the critical areas for the validity of the Christian message. This has been echoed through the years and across the world since the days of the apologists.

2. Aristides, writing about 130 A.D., gave a strong polemic in defense of the Christians in view of the kind of lives which they lived. He noted that "And because they acknowledged the goodness of God towards them, lo, account of them there flows forth the beauty that is in the world."

3. The world of today is not much unlike that of Paul's day. The home is still the critical issue for our message. If one were to observe the reality of our testimony by personal involvement in our homes, how true would be our witness? The kind of expectation an observer might desire is found in our text. Three pairs of parties are mentioned, constantly in contact, and their relations will reveal the genuineness of our faith! Study them:-

1. MARITAL relations. vv. 18, 19.

- a. Wives. The foundation responsibility of women is submission to their own husbands. No matter what sociology of modern sorts might suggest, this is the Word of God. The middle of the verb notes that this is to be done by the women themselves: submit yourselves! This sort of military arrangement within the marital bond is illustrated elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 13:1, 5).

Such conduct is "fitting" according to the text. There is no other type of action which is as proper as this for a wife in a Christian setting. See Eph. 5:22, 23.

- b. Husbands The key word for the men is affection. The present active imperative means that the hus-

band is expected to seek the best interests of his mate in unselfish giving.

Opposite to love, Paul exhorts every husband to avoid bitterness. This is a strong verb in the present middle and means: "stop being bitter," or "do not have the habit of being bitter." Perhaps the rendering of irritation is best. A true Christian home cannot thrive with a husband who rankles with bitterness in his soul.

2. PARENTAL relations. vv. 20, 21.

- a. Children. Attention is to be given by children to parents. This is utter obedience. Call this authoritarianism or whatever, but children are responsible for this! It is repeated in Eph. 6:1-3; it is rejected by unbelievers (Rom. 1:30); it is denied in the last days (2 Tim. 3:2). The "all things" is the hard nub of the point.

If a child asks why he should do this, the answer is: it is pleasing to the Lord. Paul says it is "right" in Eph. 6:1. By common consent, the rebelliousness of our day and the modern psychological teachings are diametrically opposed to the strictness of the Word of God. To whom will a Christian young person give heed? God help them to obey the Word.

- b. Fathers. It is true that this particular term is translated "parents" in Heb. 11:23. However, the context seems to favor the AV rendering, since the word "parent" is actually used in the previous verse.

The verb "provoke" is only used twice in the NT, here in the evil sense and in 2 Cor. 9:2 in the good sense. It is a very strong word and means to nag (particularly since the present tense imperative is used). It suggests the idea of interference for interference sake. It is the foolish exercise of authority.

Fathers are thus urged upon because the result of such action is the losing of heart on the part of

the children. Children can easily obey when parents have understanding and compassion. Child suicides, sullen spirits, and disquieted reactions might well be due to fatherly lack of proper understanding. A dispirited child has some reason for being that way!!

3. SERVITAL relations. 3:22 - 4:1.

This is the most extended portion of this section. Perhaps Paul elaborated so much on the master-slave relations because there were so many critical problems in this area. Mark his comments carefully:

a. Servants.

- 1) Their function. v. 22. The bondsman was one bound to his master. "servant" is formed from the verb "bind". Just one big word for them: obey. But they are not to be this only when the master is watching, else they could hide malice or scorn. They are to serve with singleness of heart, that is, without double motives. Always with loyalty of purpose and thoroughness of work. The ultimate reason for functioning in this manner is fear of the Lord (reckoning oneself as being finally responsible to Him).
- 2) Their action. v. 23. In a wide sweep, Paul argues that slaves are to work from their souls as unto the Lord and not unto men. The verb "do" in the phrase "do it heartily" is the common one for "work". The first "do" is the generic term.
- 3) Their expectation. vv. 24, 25.
Servants who are born again have some fundamental knowledge. They know that the Lord (no article with Lord, suggesting the rendering "One Who is Lord") will pay them back with an inheritance. What is not available here will be in the hereafter. Those servants, however, who do wrong, will receive a payment from the Lord accordingly.

Two reasons are given for the expectations expressed here: a) Servants serve the Lord (This