

**Lesson Twenty-Eight**  
**THE ELEMENTS OF TRUE RELIGION**

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Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:11-22.

Scripture to Memorize: "That he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross" (Eph. 2:15, 16). "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

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9. Q. What was the first necessary step in the unfolding of God's Plan of Redemption for man?
- A. The first necessary step was to reveal the elementary principles, laws and institutions of true religion.
10. Q. What is true religion?
- A. True religion is the system of means of reconciliation whereby man is bound anew to God in covenant relationship.

(1) "Religion, as the term imports, began after the Fall; for it indicates a previous apostasy. A remedial system is for a diseased subject. The primitive man could love, wonder and adore, as angels now do, without religion; but man, fallen and apostate, needs religion in order to his restoration to the love and worship and enjoyment of God. Religion, then, is a system of means of reconciliation—an institution for bringing man back to God—something to bind man anew to love and delight in God" (A. Campbell, **Christian Sys-**

tem, p. 36). Again: "Religo with all its Latin family, imports a binding again, or tying fast that which was dissolved" (Campbell, *ibid.*, p. 36, fn.). (2) The essential principle of music is harmony; of art, it is beauty; of government, authority; of sin, selfishness; so the fundamental principle of true religion is reconciliation. See Eph. 2:11-22, 2 Cor. 6:18-20.

11. Q. What are the essential elements of true religion?

A. They are: Altar, Sacrifice, and Priesthood.

(Teachers, this truth cannot be impressed too forcefully upon the minds of your pupils. It underlies all correct interpretation of the Scriptures, and all correct understanding of God's dealings with the human race.)

12. Q. What are the two departments of true religion?

A. The two departments of true religion are: (1) the things that God has done and will do for us; and (2) the things which we must do for ourselves in obedience to Him; all of which matters, both on the Divine side and on the human side, result in binding us anew to Him in covenant relationship.

"The whole proposition must of necessity in this case come from the offended party. Man could propose nothing, do nothing to propitiate his Creator, after he had rebelled against Him. Heaven, therefore, overtures; and man accepts, surrenders and returns to God. The Messiah is a gift, sacrifice is a gift, justification is a gift, the Holy Spirit is a gift, eternal life is a gift, and even the means of our personal sanctification is a gift from God. Truly, we are saved by grace. Heaven, we say, does certain things for us, and also proposes to us what we should do to inherit eternal life . . . We are only asked to accept a sacrifice which God has provided for our sins, and then the pardon of them, and to open the doors of our hearts, that the Spirit of God may come in and make his abode in us. God has provided

all these blessings for us, and only requires us to accept of them freely, without any price or idea of merit on our part. But he asks us to receive them cordially, and to give up our hearts to Him" (Campbell, *ibid.*, p. 36).

13. Q. What is the root of true religion on the divine side?

A. The root of true religion on the divine side is the grace of God.

(1) All the principles, institutions, laws and blessings of true religion issue from the grace of God. "Grace," says Cruden, "is taken for the free and eternal love and favor of God, which is the spring and source of all the benefits which we receive from Him." Dr. Hovey defines grace as "unmerited favor to sinners." (2) The mother who sacrifices herself for her sick child does it, not because she must, but because she loves the child. In like manner, to say that we are saved by grace, is to say that we are saved without necessity on the part of God to save us. This means that God did not provide a Plan of Redemption for man, with its accompanying benefits and blessings, because He was under any kind of obligation to man, or to any other creature, to have done so. It means, rather, that foreseeing man in a lost condition and in grave danger of perishing for ever, God, out of His infinite love for him, arranged, provided and offered the necessary plan and means to reclaim and regenerate him, to build him up in true holiness, and to prepare him for citizenship in heaven. Both creation and redemption have their source and root in God's amazing mercy, love and compassion. Oh, when will the human race become appreciative of this great truth and its far-reaching implications! (3) John 3:16-17. Tit. 2:11—"for the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (i. e., the promise and offer of salvation). Tit. 3:5—"according to his mercy he saved us." Eph. 2:8—"by grace have ye been saved through faith." Eph. 1:6—"to the praise of

the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

**14. Q. What is the root of true religion on the human side?**

**A. The root of true religion on the human side is our faith.**

(1) Heb. 11:6—"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." John 14:1—"ye believe in God, believe also in me." Eph. 2:8—"by grace have ye been saved through faith." Rom. 5:1—"being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. 3:26, 27—"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (2) Every act of a truly religious life issues from our faith. Repentance, for instance, is faith turning the individual from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). The good confession is faith declaring itself in the presence of witnesses. Baptism is faith yielding to the authority of Christ. The Lord's Supper is faith remembering Jesus Christ. Prayer is faith communing with God through Christ. Liberality is faith acknowledging God's ownership and man's stewardship. Meditation is faith pondering, and praise is faith exalting our God and His Christ. Faith so motivates the truly religious life, that it is said in scripture that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

**15. Q. What is true religion in its practical aspects?**

**A. It is benevolence and holiness.**

Jas. 1:27—"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

**16. Q. In view of all the Divine arrangements for our redemption, what should we do?**

- A. The very least we can do, in return for all that God has done and will do for us, is to love Him and serve Him faithfully.

God gave His Son for us. The Son gave His life for us. The Holy Spirit pleads with us, through the gospel, to return to God. To reject all these Divine overtures and calls and gifts is base ingratitude! Rom. 11:33-36, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen."

#### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

9. Q. What was the first necessary step in the unfolding of God's Plan of Redemption for man?
10. Q. What is true religion?
11. Q. What are the essential elements of true religion?
12. Q. What are the two departments of true religion?
13. Q. What is the root of true religion on the divine side?
14. Q. What is the root of true religion on the human side?
15. Q. What is true religion in its practical aspects?
16. Q. In view of all the Divine arrangements for our redemption, what should we do?