PART III

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Our discussion in Part III will be restricted to two conclusions concerning the Christian life and its ethic. The first of these conclusions (Lesson 11) is that the Cross is the unifying symbol of a distinctly Christian life and the more distinctly Christian the more prominent will be the Cross. The other conclusion (Lesson 12) is that tension is a continuing, persistent problem for any serious Christian.

These two conclusions are closely related. They, to a considerable degree, are integral parts of one another. For example, tension that contributes to the redemptive purpose of God in the world can properly be considered a phase of one's taking up a cross and following Christ. On the other hand, one who voluntarily and consistently takes up his cross or crucifies himself will discover that the Cross creates tension within him and also between him and the world in which he lives. Sometimes this tension will be felt even within his family and within the church, his spiritual family.

We can sum up by simply saying that the more serious one is about being a real rather than a nominal Christian, the more the Cross and tension will become realities in his life.

LESSON 11

Its Unifying Symbol: The Cross

When we say that the Cross is the unifying symbol of the Christian life we do not mean to imply that it is merely a symbol. It is a symbol but it is much more. It is also a historic event. That was a very real cross on which Christ died. The reality of that cross gives depth and meaning to the Cross as a symbol of the kind of life we should live for Christ in the world.

The Cross is a symbol and also a _____.

(historic event)

Christ and His Cross

What do we think about or visualize when we hear or see the words "the Cross"? Most of us doubtlessly see or visualize a cross on a hill outside Jerusalem, or we may see three crosses with the central one a little more prominent than the others. Most of us tend to relate the Cross almost exclusively to the death of Christ. We do not mean by the preceding to deprecate one iota the death of Christ on the cross. His death, along with His resurrection, is the central event of both human and divine history.

Are the following statements true or false?

1. The central event of human and divine history is Christ's transfiguration. _____

2. Jesus went about doing good, giving Himself unselfishly in service to those about Him. _____

Jesus, however, not only died on the cross, He also lived the cross-like life and in that way as well as by His death He revealed God and was a redemptive influence among men. He went about doing good, giving Himself unselfishly in service to those about Him. "The whole historical life of Jesus was the way of the Cross" (Brunner).

(1.false; 2.true)

One incident in the life of Jesus clearly reveals that He paid a price for His ministry to the needs of people. He was on His way to the house of Jairus whose daughter was dying. People were pressing and crowding Him on every side. In the crowd was a woman who had had a "flow of blood" or a "severe bleeding" (TEV) for twelve years (Luke 8:43). No one had been able to help her. She slipped up behind Jesus and touched the fringe, edge, or hem of His garment and was immediately healed. Jesus, looking around, said, "Who was it that touched me?" When no one acknowledged that he had touched Him, Peter said to Him, "Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you." In other words, many people were touching Him. How did Jesus know that the woman had touched Him? He revealed the reason He knew when He replied to Peter: "Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me" (Luke 8:46). There was one in the pressing crowd who received a blessing from Him. This could not be true without power flowing from Him to her.

His death on the cross was in a very real sense a continuation of the type and quality of life He had lived. His incarnation really involved the Cross. For example, Paul says: "For our sake he made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). Again

Jesus' incarnation really involved _____.

Paul says: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

We can properly speak of the atoning life of Christ as well as of His atoning death. He is the atoning person. At least His death cannot be separated from His life. The former was the more or less natural culmination of the life He had lived. Symbolic of the life He had lived, He was crucified between two thieves. While among men He associated with and ministered to the publicans and sinners.

The Cross or something closely akin to it or symbolized by it was central in a number of the decisive or crisis experiences in the life of Jesus. Such experiences frequently reveal the motivating influences in one's life and/or his dominant values.

The baptism of Jesus was a decisive experience (Matt. 3:13–17). Through His baptism He identified Himself with sinful men. At that time the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended like a dove and lit upon Him and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (cf. Matt. 17:5). This statement of the voice from heaven may have caused the mind of Jesus to recall the familiar words of one of the messianic psalms:

> I will tell of the decree of the Lord:
> He said to me, "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (Ps. 2:7).

The entire incident, and particularly the descending of the Spirit as the dove, likely also reminded Jesus of the following verse in Isaiah, a favourite book of His:

> Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
> I have put my spirit upon him,
> He will bring forth justice to the nations (Isa. 42:1).

If Jesus thought of this statement, He doubtlessly identified Himself with the suffering servant so prominent in the later chapters of Isaiah.

Immediately following the baptism came the temptation, another crisis or decisive experience in the life of Jesus. One, if not the main, point of the temptation story was that Jesus accepted the Father's way for His messiahship which meant suffering and the cross. He chose the road that went by way of Calvary followed by the empty tomb.

Another experience of Jesus which has been referred to as the "watershed of the Gospel" was His conversation with His disciples at Caesarea Philippi. It was there that He began to reveal to them more clearly than He had previously that He had to go to Jerusalem and there suffer many things from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders (the three groups in the Sanhedrin), and be put to death and on the third day rise again. It was from this background that Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

A week after Caesarea Philippi there is recorded the experience on the Mount of the Transfiguration when Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the Prophets talked with

(the Cross)

We can properly speak of the atoning life of Christ as well as of His _____.

(atoning death)

Christ identified Himself with _____ *men through His* _____.

(sinful, baptism)

List two truths Jesus may have taught between Caesarea

Jesus about His coming departure "which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31).

There is no record of what transpired between Caesarea Philippi and the Mount of Transfiguration. It is a "silent week." What do you suppose happened during the week? Since the main topic of conversation at Caesarea Philippi and on the Mount of Transfiguration was the Cross or His death, it seems logical to believe that during the week He continued to try to help the disciples to understand that He had to go to Jerusalem and die on a cross. He doubtlessly also attempted to make it increasingly clear to them that they had to take up their crosses if they were to follow Him.

Still another crisis or decisive experience in the life of Jesus took place in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36–46). The Cross was clearly the central reality in this experience. It, with all of its meaning, was immediately ahead. He took with Him the same three disciples who had shared with Him the transfiguration experience and went apart form the others. He said to the three, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me" (v. 38). He then went "a little farther" into the Garden of Suffering; the last few steps had to be taken alone. From the beginning of His prayer, there was submission to the Father. He said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (v. 39: the "cup" was a symbol of great suffering). It was not death that made Him cry out but the crushing weight of the sin of the sons of men upon His own sinless heart. There follows the "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," which is the epitome of real prayer. Here the Cross of Calvary was accepted. Following Gethsemane there was the actual crucifixion followed by the glorious resurrection. But without the victory in Gethsemane there would have been no Golgotha and no empty tomb.

The Christian and His Cross

It is proper that we should include the Cross in our songs. It is unfortunate, however, that we sing of an "old rugged cross *on a hill far away*." The latter expression reveals rather accurately the entirely too prevalent attitude towards the Cross. Most of us want no part of it. We are obsessed with the idea that the Cross is for Christ, a once-and-for-all-thing in the past tense. Although there is a sense in which the Cross of Christ is "once for all" (see Heb. 9:12, 28; 10:10), it "is continually trying to make itself visible in contemporary situations."[1] It is made visible, at least to a limited degree, through the lives of those who have come to the Christ of the Cross and who, in turn, have taken up their cross and are following Him. The "limited degree" in the preceding sentence stems from the fact that their cross is not His cross. "It is a matter of similarity in great dissimilarity."[2] Or, again as Barth says, "What they suffer is not what Jesus suffered. . . . They exist only . . . in the echo of His sentence, the shadow of His judgement, the after-pains of His rejection."[3]

Philippi and the Mount of Transfiguration.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Is the following statement true or false?

The Cross is made visible, at least to a limited degree, through the lives of those who have come to the Christ of the Cross, and who, in turn have taken up their Cross and are following Him. _____

(true)

[1] Douglas Webster, *In Debt to Christ* (Fortress Press, 1957), p. 12.

[2] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV, 2, 605.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 604.

The Cross, when properly understood, is not exclusively for Christ nor exclusively a thing of the past tense. Jesus is not supposed to "bear the cross alone and all the world go free. No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for *[you and]* me." Bonhoeffer's frequently quoted statement is: "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."[4] What Jesus had attempted to teach His disciples came vividly alive with a new and deeper meaning for them after His crucifixion and resurrection.

What do we mean when we say that the Christian must take up his cross to follow Christ? It does not mean the wearing of a cross around the neck or in the lapel of a coat. Neither does it refer to suffering or some burden that comes through the operation of the laws of nature. How often we hear people say when some great sorrow or some great personal suffering comes upon them, "I guess this is my cross; I will have to bear it." This is not the basic meaning of the Cross for the Christian, although the victorious acceptance of and adjustment to such suffering may be used by the Lord to bless the lives of many people.

A cross is something on which one is crucified. Crucifixion means suffering, but all suffering cannot be identified with the taking up of a cross, with Christian crucifixion. Suffering which can be identified with the Cross must be, among other things, suffering that is accepted for the sake of Christ and His cause. Its purpose and ultimate end must be redemptive, although in the deepest sense only the suffering of Christ on the cross is redemptive.

What does it mean in a more specific way for one to take up a cross? As suggested earlier, a cross is something on which one dies. It involves for the Christian the crucifixion of self with selfish ambitions and purposes. As Brunner says, "To be 'in Christ' means the death of the selfish Ego. It means the mortification of that will whose poison penetrates the whole of our nature,"[5] or it means "giving oneself up to Christ and his will as Christ gave himself up to God and his will."[6] It may mean walking an unknown path, but how grateful we should be that we walk with a known Companion who has walked that path before us! As we walk with the Christ of the Cross, we have a deepening insight into the meaning and nature of the Cross and find ourselves increasingly living in the spirit of the Cross.

Paul, who had an important place for "the cross of Christ" in his epistles gives considerable insight into the meaning of the Cross or crucifixion for the Christian.[7] He says that "those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh *["lower nature," NEB]* with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). He also says that the world had been crucified to him and he to the world

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Taking up the Cross to follow Christ does not refer to suffering or some burden that comes through the operation of the _____ of _____.

(laws, nature)

Suffering which can be identified with the Cross must be, among other things, suffering that is accepted for the sake of _____ and His _____.

(Christ, cause)

To take up a cross involves for the Christian the crucifixion of self with selfish _____ and _____.

(ambitions, purposes)

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[4] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 73.

[5] Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, p. 175.

[6] W. T. Conner, *The Gospel of Redemption* (Broadman Press, 1945), p. 130.

[7] The expression "the cross of Christ" is found only in Paul's epistles (see 1 Cor. 1:17; Gal. 6:12, 14; and Phil. 3:18) with several additional references to "the cross" (see 1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 5:11; Eph. 2:16; Phil. 2:8; Col. 1:20; 2:14). The only other specific reference to the cross outside of the Gospels is Hebrews 12:2.

(Gal.6:14). Still again he says that "our old self /"the man we once were," NEB/ was crucified with him" (Rom. 6:6; for additional references see 2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10; Phil. 3:8, 10; Col. 1:24). The nearest thing to a definition in the Bible of crucifixion or cross-bearing for a Christian is the following statement by Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul could go so far as to say "for me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). We cannot say that, but it should be the desire of our hearts that we move in that direction.

While Jesus did not set forth specifically the meaning of the Christian's cross, except that it involved self-denial, He did spell out in general terms its nature. By comparing the accounts in Matthew (16), and Mark (8), and Luke (9) of the conversation at Caesarea Philippi we discover the following concerning the Christian and his cross: (1) Taking up the Cross is voluntary: "*if a man would* come after me." The Cross is not laid on the shoulder of the disciple; it is taken up. (2) It is necessary: "if any man would *come after* me." We do not have to take up the Cross; He will not force it on us, but we must take up our cross if we are to follow Him. This emphasis is not only found at Caesarea Philippi but also in other conversations He had with His disciples (see Matt. 10:38; Luke 14:27). There is no real discipleship without the Cross, or, as Bonhoeffer says, "Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of His suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares His Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. . . . In other words it means the cross."[8] (3) Taking up a cross is personal: "if *any* man," (4) It is also universal. Here the three Synoptic Gospels combined give us a very graphic picture. Mark 8:34 says that "he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them. . ." Luke 9:23 says, "and he said to all." Taking up the Cross does not apply exclusively to the missionary, to the pastor, or to others in church-related vocations. It applies to all of God's children. (5) One other great truth concerning the taking up of the Cross is revealed by an examination of Luke's account of Caesarea Philippi. According to Luke, Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). It is a daily or continuing experience.

What five discoveries about the Christian and his cross are found when one compares Matthew 16, Mark 8, and Luke 9?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Results of Taking up the Cross

We have discussed quite briefly the meaning of the Cross for the Christian and the nature of his cross-bearing. There is one other aspect of the Christian and his cross that we should consider. It is tremendously significant from the viewpoint of everyday Christian living. Let us formulate it as a question: What are the results of a Christian taking up his cross? We will discover the answer to this question by reviewing briefly the relation of the Cross and the purposes of God in the life of Christ. As suggested earlier, Christ came to reveal God to man, to reveal His love for man and also His hatred of sin. Man could never have known fully either of these had Christ not died on the

[8] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 71.

cross. It is John who says, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). The Cross also elicits or produces a love that must be shared with others. One reason for this is the fact that the love expressed in the Cross is not exclusively for us but for all men. Men around us will come to know that kind of love to the degree that we, in response to His love for us, take up our cross and follow Him.

Also, as we take up a cross and follow Him we will find life for ourselves. Immediately after His invitation at Caesarea Philippi for the disciples to deny self and take up the cross and follow Him, He said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25; cf. 10:39; John 12:25). Similarly, Paul says, "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Rom. 6:8). The cross is not only a symbol of death but also of life.

Another way of stating this same great truth is to say that resurrection follows crucifixion. Oscar Cullman says we should write it crucifixion-resurrection. Jesus told the disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things and be killed and "on the third day be raised" (Matt. 16:21). His resurrection was mentioned in the same breath as His crucifixion. So it is with the child of God. Bonhoeffer's frequently quoted statement is that "Jesus Christ and His call are necessarily our death and our life."[9] Death comes first, then life, but there is no real crucifixion without resurrection. Here is one of the marvellous paradoxes of the gospel: life comes through death, but it has to be a real death or crucifixion, without any motivation beyond the crucifixion itself. There is no place here for self-seeking self-denial, for crucifixion with the expectation of resurrection.

There is one other glorious result of the Christian's cross-bearing. He will not only find life in its fullness, he also will be a source of life to others. Jesus came to redeem man as well as to reveal God. We cannot redeem men but we can be a redeeming influence among men. This we will be as we deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him. In John 12 immediately preceding the statement by Jesus that "he who loves his life loses it," He said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone [*"a single grain," Ph.*]; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" [*a rich harvest," NEB*] (v. 24). Later in the same conversation He said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (v. 32). In verse 24 is found the basic law of God's universe: new life comes through death. In verse 25 it is applied to human relations, while in verse 32 it is applied to the spiritual order. We give life to others as we give our own lives in unselfish devotion to them and to our heavenly Father.

Since none of us is perfect we are forced to say that to the degree that we deny self, to the degree that we take up our cross, to that degree only we will reveal God and His power, will discover life abundant, and will be a source of life and blessing to others.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

As we take up a cross and follow Him, we will find _____ *for* _____.

(life, ourselves)

Death comes first, then life, but there is not real crucifixion without _____.

(resurrection)

The Christian will not only find life in its fulness, he also will be a source of _____ *to* _____.

(life, others)

Paraphrase John 12:24.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

In Part II it was suggested that the Christian life is so broad and varied that no one term can adequately describe its ethic. It is clear, however, that the cross is the one symbol or general principle that most nearly unifies, ties into one bundle, and illuminates the various aspects or approaches to the Christian life and its ethic.

For example, if the dominant motive of the Christian's life is the glory of God (Lesson 6), it will mean the denial of self, expressed in the taking up of a cross. Similarly, one will move towards perfection or full maturity (Lesson 9) as he walks in fellowship with the crucified and risen Christ. We will walk with Him only as and to the degree that we deny self and take up our cross and follow Him. Other terms are used to describe the Christian ethic such as an ethic of the Holy Spirit, a *koinonia* ethic, a covenant ethic, and a commitment ethic. Each of these would require the denial of self and the taking up of a cross.

Let us spell out a little more fully the relation of the Cross to the will of God as the source of authority (Lesson 7), to the Kingdom of God as the supreme value (Lesson 8), and to love as the crowning virtue (Lesson 10) of the Christian life.

There was evidently a close relation between the will of God and the Cross in the life of Christ. You remember the incident at Jacob's well (John 4:1–42). Jesus was weary and stayed at the well while His disciples went into town for food. He had had the conversation with the Samaritan woman during which He had introduced her to the living water. When the disciples returned and offered Him food, He declined and said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know" (v. 32). They thought possibly someone had brought Him food. His word to them was, "My food is to do [*"obey," TEV*] the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (v. 34). On another occasion He said, "I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 5:30; cf. John 6:38). Here is the language of self-giving, of self-denial or cross-bearing. The Cross for Jesus represented the last step of submission to the Father's will.

What is true in the life of the Master should be true in the life of His follower: we should not seek our own will but the will of Him who has sent us. What Jesus said after His resurrection to the small group of disciples He would say to all of us, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). He was sent; we are sent. He was sent to do the Father's will; we are sent to do His will. He was sent to reveal God; we are sent to reveal Him. He was God incarnate; we are to be Christ incarnate. He was sent to redeem man; we are sent to be a redeeming influence among men. To accomplish all that He was sent to do meant the Cross. To accomplish all that He has sent us to do, likewise means the Cross for us.

Another of the central concepts in the life and teachings of Jesus was the Kingdom of God. Some consider it the key idea or watchword of His earthly ministry and of His movement in general. The disciple of Christ is to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). The reign, the rule, or the Kingdom of God is to be sought before wealth and material things, even before the necessities of life. Jesus promised that

The unifying principle for the Christian life and its ethic is the _____.

(Cross)

Jesus was sent to redeem man; we are sent to be a _____ *among men.*

(redeeming influence)

The disciple of Christ is to seek first the Kingdom of God and _____

the latter would be added if His followers put the Kingdom first.

In the wonderful parables about the Kingdom there are two that are particularly pertinent for our purpose. Jesus said the Kingdom was like a treasure hid in a field or it was like a merchant in search of pearls. The disciple is to sell or give up all that he has for the sake of the Kingdom. Here is involved self-denial or the taking up of a cross.

The close relation of love(*agape*) and the Cross is equally clear. As suggested previously, *agape* is self-giving, it speaks the language of the Cross. The Cross is the supreme demonstration, manifestation, or proof of the love of God. It is at the Cross that we most fully know that God is love. In turn, the child of God is to love God supremely. In what has been termed the exaggerated language of contrast, Jesus on one occasion said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot by my disciple" (Luke 14:26). The words immediately following the preceding are: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Evidently supreme love for Christ and the bearing of a cross are equated.

Furthermore, Christians are to love one another. How much? Jesus said, "As I have loved you" (John 15:12). How much had He loved them and how much does He love us: enough to give His life on the cross. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

We are not only to love our fellow Christians, we are to love our neighbour, and he is anyone in need. This love is even to reach out to enemies. Surely such love necessitates self-denial, self-sacrifice symbolized by the Cross. It is the *agape* type or quality of love that has this spirit of self-giving.

The Cross, "the supreme paradox of all time," as a symbol expresses and breathes life into some of the great paradoxes of the gospel. Those paradoxes set forth some of the most significant truths of our Christian faith. They express in different words and ways the fact that resurrection follows crucifixion not only in the life of Christ but also in the life of His disciple. One of those paradoxes stated by Jesus on more than one occasion was that exaltation comes through humility (Matt. 23:1–12; Luke 14:7–11; 18:9–14). He also plainly taught that greatness comes through service (Matt. 20:26–27; 23:11; Mark 9:35) and that life comes through death (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33; John 12:25).

Another paradox particularly prevalent in the Pauline epistles is that the free man in Christ is to surrender his freedom and become a slave of Christ and a servant of man. For example, he says, "For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:13). Real freedom comes through enslavement to Christ and His way of life. Without the Cross, the preceding and other paradoxes of the gospel would be meaningless.

Application to Life

Just as Christ is our "eternal contemporary," likewise His cross, its message and spirit, is relevant for every age and every

(His righteousness)

Is the following statement true or false?

The disciple is to sell or give up part of what he has for the sake of the Kingdom. _____

(false)

Summarize the meaning of Luke 14:26-27.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Is the following statement true or false?

Resurrection follows crucifixion not only in the life of Christ but also in the life of His disciples. _____

(true)

The free man in Christ is to surrender his freedom and become a _____ *to Christ and a* _____ *to man.*

(slave, servant)

problem. It is the Cross that reconciles us to one another and "to God in one body." This reconciliation brings "hostility to an end" (Eph. 2:16), whether that hostility is based on national origin, culture, economic class, race, or religion.

The spirit symbolized by the Cross is to be applied personally by the Christian. We are not just to talk about it; we are to seek as best as we can to take up our cross and follow Christ. This means, among other things, that we are to love our enemies that we may be like our Father who sends rain and sunshine upon the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:43–45). It means that we are not to give primary consideration to what we think is right for us to do, but we are to think in terms of what others think and the effect that our behaviour will have upon others and particularly upon the cause of Christ (1 Cor. 10:24, 31). The way of the Cross will remain for the best of us an aspiration rather than an actual achievement. But we should seek as best we can to move constantly in it and towards it.

The spirit symbolized by the Cross is also to be applied to the broader social relations and problems of life. The Cross is central in the Christian social strategy. It is the Christian method of social change. This involves the returning of good for evil, the strong serving the weak, the privileged taking the initiative in working out the problems of the underprivileged, even the just to a degree taking upon themselves the sins of the unjust.

This means that voluntary self-giving with a redemptive purpose or goal which can properly be called an ethic of the Cross is abidingly relevant for our world and its problems. The Cross is God's strategy for overcoming sin, not only in the individual's life but also in the life of the world.

Let us briefly apply this to one particular area—the area of race relations. Does it mean that those who belong to the oppressed minority are to bear patiently any injustice and discrimination? Is this their cross? This could be a cross in the Christian sense only if it was accepted voluntarily and if it was redemptive in outcome.

The Cross applies in a particular way to the influential, to the powerful, to the privileged. They are the ones who can voluntarily correct the evils or ills of our society. They are the ones to whom the voluntary principle will apply in a special way. The Cross for them can mean giving of self, the sacrifice of privilege for the sake, not only of others, but also for the sake of society, and what is more important, for the sake of the cause of Christ.

Changes in society are brought about, in the main, by one of two ways: by pressure and the use of force or by peaceful methods. The latter is the Christian method for change. The only hope for a peaceful solution with a minumum even of social pressure for the contemporary racial crisis, along with other world problems, is that the powerful and privileged will accept the responsibility to find a solution in harmony with the Christian spirit and Christian teachings.

Let us sum up by saying that the Cross and what it symbolizes is the central distinctive unifying element in original Christianity, including its ethic. We must in the contemporary period return to this central emphasis, must understand more clearly what the Cross means in the Christian's life, and must apply more consistently the ethic of the Cross if we are to revitalize

The Cross reconciles us to one another and to "_____ in one _____."

(God, body)

The Cross is central in the _____ social _____.

(Christian, strategy)

The Cross is influential in a particular way to the _____, to the _____.

(powerful, privileged)

Is the following statement true or false?

Changes in society are brought about, in the main, by one of two ways: by pressure and the use of force or by peaceful methods. _____

(true)

contemporary Christianity and make the Christian religion a vital factor in meeting the world's needs. "The way of the cross leads home" for the individual, but it is also the way of social reconstruction and moral reformation.

Furthermore, the Cross is the symbol of the fundamental law of God's universe. If we had eyes to see, we would see a cross written at the centre of that universe. The first or basic law of life is not self-preservation; it is self-denial and self-sacrifice, it is "the way of the Cross." This law is operative in the physical universe and in the social order as well as in the spiritual realm.

The basic law of life is _____ and _____.
(self-denial, self-sacrifice)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. The author states that the Cross is both a symbol and historic event; what does he suggest that the reality of the Cross brings about? _____

2. What is the central event in both human and divine history? _____

3. What examples does the author give that we can properly speak of both the life and the death of Jesus as atoning? _____

4. What event was the topic of discussion on the Mount of Transfiguration? _____

5. What truths does the author feel that Jesus doubtless tried to teach His followers between Caesarea Philippi and the Mount of Transfiguration? _____

6. How is the Cross made visible? _____

7. What common misconception about "taking up the Cross" does the author refute? _____

8. What suffering can be identified with the Cross? _____

9. What is involved for the Christian to take up the Cross?

10. What happens to the Christian as he walks with the Christ of the Cross?

11. List the five discoveries concerning the Christian and his cross found by comparing Matthew 16, Mark 8, and Luke 9.

    1.
    2.
    3.
    4.
    5.

12. In additon to finding life in its fullness, what other glorious result does the Cross-bearing Christian find?

13. What two facts were evidently closely related in the life of Christ?

14. What do the parables about the Kingdom reveal that a disciple of Christ should do?

15. What two things are equated in Luke 14:26-27?

16. What paradox concerning the free man is particularly prevalent in the Pauline epistles?

17. What position does the Cross hold in the Christian social strategy?

18. To what groups does the Cross apply in a particular way?

19. In what two ways are changes in society brought about?

20. What is the first or basic law of life?

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). The following activities are based on the study guide text.

1. What is wrong with identifying the Cross as *only* a symbol?
2. How does the author link the life of Jesus with His death in the atonement?
3. List the crisis experiences in Jesus' life mentioned by the author. Give Scripture references for each one.
4. Why does the author say that it is unfortunate that we sing of an "old rugged cross on a hill far away"?
5. How may suffering be identified with the Cross?
6. List and briefly explain the five discoveries about the Christian and his cross mentioned by the author.
7. When Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you," what did it include for you and for me?
8. Since the Cross is central in the Christian social strategy, how does this involve Christian living?

Advanced activity (Level 3). The following activities are based on the study guide text.

1. Prepare a sermon outline on the topic: "The Way of the Cross." Give Scripture references. (Students who are not pastors or studying to be pastors may prepare a Bible lesson instead.) Be prepared to share the sermon outline with the seminar group.
2. Explain what is meant by the "ethic of the Cross."
3. What results when a Christian takes up his cross?

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the meaning of the Cross from these perspectives: (1) The world, (2) the Christian, and (3) the Father.
2. What effect will the "ethic of the cross" have on an individual who takes it seriously? Will he become "an easy touch," a mild-mannered individual who can be "run over by others"? Will its effect on him be primarily negative or positive? Will he consider primarily his own rights or the rights of others? What will be the relative importance he gives to his own rights and his responsibility?
3. Level 3 students should share their sermon or lesson outline. The leader should lead a discussion of the content with all the students.
4. Discuss the relation of the ethic of the Cross to social change.