

Short Papers — Section 1 of 10.

C. H. Mackintosh.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE 1995 EDITION

Charles Henry Mackintosh was well known for both his spoken ministry and his written ministry which spanned 50 years. In style and character, his writings, often under the initials C.H.M., clearly showed his very deep love for the Lord Jesus and for His saints. He believed in and wrote about the narrow pathway the Christian is called to walk by the Word of God, but for a need of a large heart of love and grace while never giving up or failing to practice any truth found in that Word. Although he wrote a number of years ago, his writing seems very up-to-date in speaking of deteriorating world political and moral conditions — a giving up of the truth of the Word of God even by professed Christians.

Many of CHM's writings were in the form of short articles and letters to persons who asked him questions. We are thankful to those who, in the past, have collected these articles and letters for publication and arranged them in the published order. Although this order is generally random, some which naturally fall together are placed together.

This 1995 edition of Short Papers retains about 98% of CHM's original words, but for the modern reader, a number of words, little used today, have been changed to their modern equivalents. Some very long sentences and paragraphs have been broken up to enhance readability, and much of the heavy punctuation has been lightened. A few references to events or publications no longer relevant today have been removed. The King James Translation is used, unchanged, except for updating the word “charity” to “love” and capitalizing pronouns referring to deity.

Believers Bookshelf sends forth this 1995 edition with the prayer that these writings will be a blessing to a whole new generation of readers around the world. We thank the unnamed ones who spent many hours reviewing, finalizing and typesetting this manuscript. We commend it to you with the Scriptural admonition to “prove all things, hold fast the good” (1 Thess. 5: 21).

July 1995

A WORD TO OUR READERS

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

We desire to offer you a few earnest words on a subject which we believe to be of commanding interest and importance; it is this: The divine sufficiency and supreme authority of Holy Scripture and the urgent need of submitting ourselves absolutely to its guidance in all things.

In thus stating our thesis, we would not have you to suppose for a moment that we undervalue human writings in their proper place. Nothing is further from our thoughts. Indeed it would ill become us to speak disparagingly of a branch of Christian ministry so largely used of God in all ages of His Church's history, and specially in this our own day.

No, beloved, we prize human writings more than we can attempt to say. We receive them as streams from the Fountain Head. Further, we would add that we have rarely met anyone who claimed

to despise Christian writings, on the plea of reading nothing but the Bible, who was not crude, shallow and contracted. We might just as well say that we would not listen to a brother speaking to us in the assembly, as refuse to read what God had given him to write, provided we had time to do so. How often has a book or tract been made a rich blessing to the soul, either in bringing one to Christ or building up or helping on in Him! How often may we have read some passage of Scripture and seen nothing in it until the Lord used some paragraph in a human writing to unlock its treasures to our hearts! None of us are self-sufficient. We are dependent one on another. We grow by that which every joint supplies. We need all the “helps” which God has set in the body for our common profit and blessing.

Having said this to guard against misunderstanding and to put human writings in their right place, we return to our special object in this brief paper.

There is but one supreme and paramount authority, and that is the Word of God. All human writings are interesting as references, valuable as aids, but they are worthless, yea mischievous as authority. Scripture is all-sufficient. We want absolutely nothing in the way of guidance and authority beyond what we possess in the sacred canon of Scripture. No doubt, it is only by the Holy Spirit we can understand, appreciate or be guided by Scripture. God may use a human voice or a human pen to help us, but Scripture is divinely sufficient. It can make a child wise unto salvation and it can make a man perfect unto all good works. See 2 Timothy 3: 15-17.

Now, having such a guide, such an authority, what becomes us as Christians — as children of God and servants of Christ? Clearly, to submit ourselves absolutely and unreservedly to its teaching in all things! We are bound by every argument and every motive which can possibly sway the heart, to test everything in which we are engaged or with which we stand associated, by the holy standard of the Word of God, and if we find anything, no matter what, which will not stand that test, to abandon it at once and forever.

It is precisely here that we feel there is such serious failure in the professing Church. As a rule, we do not find the conscience under the immediate action and government of the Word. Human opinions bear sway. Human creeds and confessions of faith govern the heart and form the religious character. Human traditions and habits of thought are allowed a formative influence over the soul. If it be merely a question of personal salvation, profit or blessing, Scripture will be listened to. People are glad and thankful to hear how they can be saved and blessed. Everything that bears upon the individual conditions and destiny will be welcomed.

But the moment it becomes a question of Christ's authority over us in spirit, soul and body; when the Word of God is brought to bear upon our entire practical career, upon our personal habits, our domestic arrangements, our commercial pursuits, our religious associations, our ecclesiastical position, then, alas! it becomes apparent how completely the authority of Holy Scripture is virtually thrown overboard. In point of fact, the enemy seems to succeed as completely in robbing professing Christians of the real value, power and authority of the Word of God, as when, during that long and dreary period of the middle ages, it was wrapped in the shroud of a dead language and buried in the dark cloisters of Rome. It is appalling when one comes in contact with the actual condition of things among professing Christians, to observe the ignorance of Scripture and the carelessness about it. Nor can any thoughtful person doubt that the latter is the cause of the former. “If any man *will* do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” But if the Word of God be neglected and practically ignored as an authority, need we marvel when we find people ignorant of its precious contents?

We have been much struck of late in our dealings with Christian professors, in noticing the little moral weight which Scripture seems to possess. You will rarely meet with anyone who is prepared to

start with this one grand point, that the voice of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is absolutely conclusive, that it admits of no appeal, that it closes all discussion. We speak not now of man's interpretation of Scripture — of anything in which it can be said, "That is your opinion." We speak only of the written Word of God which we possess and to which we are individually responsible to submit ourselves in all things. God has put His Word into our hands. And He has put His Spirit into our hearts, and by that Spirit we can understand the Word; and we are solemnly bound to be guided and governed by that Word in all the details of our practical career.

It is this we feel imperatively called upon to press home upon the hearts and consciences of our readers. In looking to Him for the theme, we got this answer, "Press upon your readers the sufficiency and authority of Holy Scripture and the necessity of absolute subjection to it in all things." This we have sought to do, and now we leave it with our readers to consider as before the Lord their personal responsibility in this weighty matter. We would entreat them, as they love the Lord Jesus Christ, to examine in the light of Scripture, their entire position and path, and by the grace of God and for His glory, to abandon at once and forever all that is not in perfect accord with that holy standard. Thus shall their path be as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. Oh! may the true language of all our hearts be, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" God grant it, for Christ's sake.

HOW TO STUDY SCRIPTURE

It is a very difficult for anyone to attempt to prescribe for another the proper method of studying Scripture. The infinite depths of Holy Scripture, like the exhaustless resources that are in God and the moral glories of the Person of Christ, are only unfolded to faith and need. This makes it so very simple. It is not cleverness or intellectual power we need, but the simplicity of a little child. The One who composed the Holy Scriptures must open our understandings to receive their precious teaching. And He will do so, if only we wait on Him in real earnestness of heart.

We must never lose sight of the weighty fact that it is as we act on what we know that our knowledge shall increase. It will never do to sit down like a bookworm to read the Bible. We may fill our intellect with biblical knowledge, we may have the doctrines of the Bible and the letter of Scripture at our finger-tips without one particle of unction or spiritual power. We must go to Scripture as a thirsty man goes to a well; as a hungry man goes to a meal; as a mariner goes to a chart. We must go to it because we cannot do without it. We go, not merely to study, but to feed. The instincts of the divine nature lead us to the Word of God as the new-born babe desires the milk by which he is to grow. It is by feeding on the Word that the new man grows.

Hence we may see how very real and practical is this question of how to study Scripture. It is intimately connected with our entire moral and spiritual condition, our daily walk, our actual habits and ways. God has given us His Word to form our character, to govern our conduct and shape our course. Therefore, if the Word has not a formative influence and a governing power over us, it is the height of folly to think of storing up a quantity of scriptural knowledge in the intellect. It can only puff us up and deceive us. It is a most dangerous thing to traffic in unfelt truth; it brings on a heartless indifference, levity of spirit, insensibility of conscience, which is appalling to people of serious piety. There is nothing that tends so to throw us completely into the hands of the enemy as a quantity of head knowledge of truth without a tender conscience, a true heart, an upright mind. The mere profession of truth which does not act on the conscience and come out in the life, is one of the special dangers of the day in which our lot is cast. Better by far only to know a little in reality and power, than profess a quantity of truth that lies powerless in the region of the understanding, exerting no formative influence

upon the life. I would much rather be honestly in Romans 7 than fictitiously in Romans 8. In the former case I am sure to come right, but in the latter there is no telling what I may come to.

As to the question of making use of human writings to help us in the study of Scripture, great caution is needed. No doubt the Lord may and does make use of the writings of His servants, just as He uses their oral ministry for our instruction and edification. Indeed, in the present broken and divided state of the Church, it is wonderful to mark the Lord's rich grace and tender care in feeding His beloved people with the writings of His servants.

But, we repeat, great caution is needed, earnest waiting on the Lord, that we may not abuse so precious a gift, that it may not lead us to trade on borrowed capital. If we are really dependent upon God, He will give us the right thing; He will put the right book into our hands; He will feed us with food suitable for us. Thus we receive it from Himself and hold it in communion with Himself. It is fresh, living, powerful, formative; it tells on the heart and shines in the life; and we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Precious growth! Would there were more of it!

Finally, we have to remember that Holy Scripture is the voice of God and the written Word is the transcript of the living Word. It is only by the Holy Spirit's teaching we can really understand Scripture, and He reveals its living depths to faith and need. Let us never forget this.

QUESTIONS; AND HOW TO MEET THEM

I have been very much interested of late in looking at the excellent way in which John the Baptist met the various questions which came before him, for there were many questions in his day, as there are in ours.

What I specially refer to now is presented to us in the Gospel of John (John 1 and John 3). The first question which this dear and honored servant of Christ was called to answer had respect to himself, and of this he makes very short work indeed. "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?"

It is unwelcome to any right-minded person to be asked to speak about himself. So, I doubt not, John found it. He readily told them that he was not the Messiah, that he was not Elijah, that he was not even the prophet. But they wanted a *positive* answer. "They said unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" Little indeed had he to say of himself. "I" had a very small place in John's thoughts. "A voice." Was this all? Yes; this was all. The Spirit in the prophet had spoken; John quotes the words and there he leaves it. Blessed servant! Honored witness! Would we had more of his excellent spirit, more of his method of answering questions!

But these Pharisees were not satisfied. John's self-hiding spirit was entirely beyond them. "They asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither the prophet?"

Here again the Baptist makes short work. "John answering them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth One among you whom ye know not. He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Thus, as to himself, he was merely a voice. And, as to his work, he baptized with water, and he was only too glad to retire behind that blessed One whose shoe's latchet he felt himself utterly unworthy to unloose.

This is uncommonly fine. I feel assured, my beloved friend, that the lovely spirit displayed by

this most illustrious servant of Christ is what you earnestly covet for yourself. And I think I am one with you. I do long to know more and more of this self-hiding — this losing sight of self and its doings, this retiring spirit. Truly it is much needed in this day of egotistical boast and pretension.

Turn with me for a moment to John 3. Here we have another kind of question. It is not now about himself or his work, but about purifying. “There arose a question among some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came to John and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth and all come to Him.”

Now this was a mistake, for “Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples.” But this is not the point here. What strikes me is John's mode of settling all questions, right or wrong. He finds a perfect solution for all in the presence of his Lord. “John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.”

How true! How simple! How perfectly obvious! What a complete settlement of every question! If a man has anything at all, from where did it, where could it, come? Surely only from heaven. What a perfect cure for strife, envy, jealousy and emulation! “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” What a tale this tells of earth. What a record it bears to heaven and to God! Not one atom of good on earth but what comes from heaven. Not an atom of good in man but what comes from God. Why then should anyone boast or be jealous or envious? If all goodness is from above, let there be an end of all strife and let all hearts go up in praise to “the Father of lights.”

Thus it was the Baptist met the questions of his day. He let all the questioners know that their questions had little interest for him. And more than that, he let them know where all his interests lay. This blessed servant found all his springs in the Lamb of God, in His precious work, in His glorious Person. The voice of the Bridegroom was enough for him, and having heard that, his joy was full. The question of purifying might be interesting enough in its place, and like all other questions, it had its right and its wrong side, but for John, the Bridegroom's voice was enough. In His presence he found a divine answer to every question, a divine solution for every difficulty. He looked up to heaven and saw every good thing coming from there. He looked into the Bridegroom's face and saw every moral glory centered there. This was enough for him. Why trouble him with questions of any kind — questions about himself or his work, or about purifying? He lived far beyond the region of questions, in the blessed presence of his Lord, and there he found all his heart could ever need.

Now, my much loved friend, it seems to me that you and I would do well to take a leaf out of John's book as regards all this. I need not remind you that in this our day there are questions agitating men's minds. Yes, and some of us are called to account for not expressing ourselves more decidedly on some of these questions. But I believe the devil is doing his utmost to alienate our hearts from Christ and from one another by questions. We ought not to be ignorant of his devices. He does not come openly and say, “I am the devil and I want to divide and scatter you by questions.” Yet this is precisely what he is seeking to do.

Now, it matters not whether the question be right or wrong in itself; the devil can make use of a right question just as effectively as of a wrong one, provided he can succeed in raising that question to undue prominence, causing it to come between our souls and Christ, and between us and our brethren. I can understand a difference in judgment on various minor questions. Christians have differed about such for long centuries and they will continue to differ until the end of time. It is human weakness. But when any question is allowed to assume undue prominence, it ceases to be mere human weakness and becomes a wile of Satan. I may have a very decided judgment on any given point, and so may you. But

what I long for now is a thorough sinking of all questions and a rejoicing together in hearing the Bridegroom's voice and going on together in the light of His blessed countenance. This will confound the enemy. It will effectively deliver us from prejudice and partiality and from cliques. We shall then measure one another, not by our views of any particular question, but by our appreciation of the Person of Christ and our devotion to His cause.

In a word, my beloved and valued friend, what I long for is that you and I, and all our dear brethren throughout the whole world, may be characterized by a deep-toned, thorough devotion to the name and truth and cause of Christ. I long to cultivate broad sympathies that can take in every true lover of Christ, even though we don't see eye to eye on all minor questions. At best "we know but in part," and we can never expect people to agree with us about questions. But if Christ be our one absorbing object, all other things will assume their right place, their relative value, their proper proportions. "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect (as many as have Christ for their one object) be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule (Christ), and mind the same thing" (Christ). The moment anything else but Christ is introduced as a rule to walk by, it is simply the work of the devil. Of this I am as sure as I hold this pen in my hand.

May the Lord keep us all close to Himself, walking together, not in sectarianism, but in true brotherly love, seeking the blessing and prosperity of all who belong to Christ and promoting in every possible way His blessed cause until He come!

EPAPHRODITUS

We want the reader to turn with us to Philippians 2 and study the brief sketch of the interesting character of Epaphroditus. There is great moral beauty in it. We are not told very much about him, but in what we are told, we see a great deal of what is truly lovely and pleasant — much that makes us long for men of the same stamp in this our day. We cannot do better than quote the inspired record concerning him; and may the blessed Spirit apply it to our hearts and lead us to cultivate the same lovely grace which shone so brightly in that dear and honored servant of Christ!

"I supposed it necessary," says the blessed apostle, "to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation, because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me" (Phil. 2: 25-30).

Now it is quite possible that some of us, on reading the above, may feel disposed to inquire if Epaphroditus was a great evangelist or teacher or some highly gifted servant of Christ, seeing the inspired apostle bestows upon him so many high and honorable titles, styling him his "brother and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier."

Well, we are not told that he was a great preacher or a great traveler or a profound teacher in the Church of God. All we are told about him in the above touching narrative is that he came forward in a time of real need to supply a missing link, to "fill a gap," as we say. The beloved Philippians had it upon their hearts to send help to the revered and aged apostle Paul in his prison at Rome. He was in need and they longed to supply his need. They loved him, and God had laid it upon their loving hearts to communicate with his necessities. They thought of him, though he was far away from them, and they

longed to minister to him of their substance.

How lovely was this! How pleasing to the heart of Christ! Harken to the glowing terms in which the dear old prisoner speaks of their precious ministry. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.... Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" (Phil. 4: 10, 14-18).

Here we see the place which Epaphroditus filled in this blessed business. There lay the beloved apostle in his prison at Rome, and there lay the loving offering of the saints at Philippi. But how was it to be conveyed to him? These were not the days of banks checks and post-office money orders. No, nor of railway traveling. It was no easy matter to get from Philippi to Rome in those days. But Epaphroditus, that dear, unpretending, self-surrendering servant of Christ, presented himself to supply the missing link, to do the very thing that was needed and nothing more; to be the channel of communication between the assembly at Philippi and the apostle at Rome. Deep and real as was the apostle's need, precious and seasonable as was the Philippians' gift, yet an instrument was needed to bring them both together, and Epaphroditus offered himself for the work. There was a manifest need and he filled it. He did not aim at doing some great showy thing, something which would make him very prominent and cause his name to be blazed abroad as some wonderful person. Ah! no, Epaphroditus was not one of the pushing, self-confident, extensive class. He was a dear, self-hiding, lowly servant of Christ, one of that class of workmen to whom we are irresistibly attracted. Nothing is more charming than an unpretending, retiring man who is content just to fill the empty niche; to render the needed service, whatever it is; to do the work cut out for him by the Master's hand.

There are some who are not content unless they are at the head and tail of everything. They seem to think that no work can be rightly done unless they have a hand in it. They are not satisfied to supply a missing link. How repulsive are all such! How we retire from them! Self-confident, self-sufficient, ever pushing themselves into prominence. They have never measured themselves in the presence of God, never been broken down before Him, never taken their true place of self-abasement.

Epaphroditus was not of this class at all. He put his life in his hand to serve other people; and when at death's door, instead of being occupied with himself or his ailments, he was thinking of others. "He longed after you all and was full of heaviness" — not because he was sick, but — "because ye had heard that he had been sick." Here was true love. He knew what his beloved brethren at Philippi would be feeling when informed of his serious illness, an illness brought on by his willing-hearted service to them.

All this is morally lovely. It does the heart good to contemplate this exquisite picture. Epaphroditus had evidently studied in the school of Christ. He had sat at the Master's feet and drunk deeply into His spirit. In no other way could he have learned such holy lessons of self-surrender and thoughtful love for others. The world knows nothing of such things; nature cannot teach such lessons. They are altogether heavenly, spiritual, divine. Would that we knew more of them! They are rare among us with all our high profession. There is a most humiliating amount of selfishness in all of us, and it looks so hideous in connection with the name of Jesus. It might agree well enough with Judaism,

but its inconsistency with Christianity is terribly glaring.

Notice the very touching manner in which the inspired apostle commends Epaphroditus to the assembly at Philippi. It seems as if he could not make enough of him, to speak after the manner of men. "He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." How deeply affecting! What a tide of divine affection and sympathy rolled in upon that unpretending, self-sacrificing servant of Christ! The whole assembly at Philippi, the blessed apostle and above all, God Himself all engaged in thinking about a man who did not think about himself. Had Epaphroditus been a self-seeker, had he been occupied about himself or his interests, or even his work, his name would never have shone on the page of inspiration. But no; he thought of others, not of himself. Therefore God and His apostle and His Church thought of him.

Thus it will ever be. A man who thinks much of himself saves others the trouble of thinking about him. But the lowly, the humble, the modest, the unpretending, the retiring, the self-empty, who think of and live for others, who walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, these are the persons to be thought of and cared for, loved and honored, as they ever will be by God and His people.

"I sent him therefore the more carefully," says the beloved apostle, "that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me" (Phil. 2: 28-30).

Thus it was with this most dear and honored servant of Christ. He did not regard his life, but laid it at his Master's feet, just to supply the missing link between the church of God at Philippi and the suffering and needy apostle at Rome. Therefore, the apostle calls upon the Church to hold him in reputation, and the honored name of Epaphroditus has been handed down to us by the pen of inspiration, and his precious service has been recorded and the record of it read by untold millions, while the names and the doings of the self-seekers, the self-important, the pretentious of every age and every clime and every condition are sunk — and deservedly so — in eternal oblivion.

SELF-SURRENDER

(PHILIPPIANS 2)

It is delightful to contemplate the moral triumphs of Christianity — the victories which it gains over self and the world, and the marvelous way in which such victories are obtained. The law said, "Thou shalt do this; and thou shalt not do that." But Christianity speaks a totally different language. In it, we see life bestowed as a free gift — life flowing down from a risen and glorified Christ. This is something entirely beyond the range of the law. The language of the law was, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them." Long life in the land was all the law proposed to the man who could keep it. Eternal life in a risen Christ was something utterly unknown and unthought of under the legal system.

But Christianity not only gives eternal life; it gives also an object with which that life can be occupied — a center round which the affections of that life can circulate — a model on which that life can be formed. Thus it gains its mighty moral triumphs. Thus it gains its conquests over a selfish nature and a selfish world. It gives divine life and a divine center; and as the life moves round that center we are taken out of self.

This is the secret of self-surrender. It cannot be reached in any other way. The unconverted man finds his center in self, and hence to tell him not to be selfish is to tell him not to be at all. This holds

good even in the matter of mere religiousness. A man will attend to his religion in order, as he thinks, to promote his eternal interest. But this is quite a different thing from finding an object and a center outside himself. Christianity alone can supply these. The gospel of the grace of God is the only thing that can effectively meet man's need and deliver him from the selfishness which belongs to him. The unrenewed man lives for himself. He has no higher object. The life which he possesses is alienated from the life of God. He is away from God. He moves around another center altogether, and until he is born again, until he is renewed, regenerated, born of the Word and Spirit of God, it cannot be otherwise. Self is his object, his center in all things. He may be moral, amiable, religious, benevolent, but until he is converted, he has not done with himself as to the ground of his being or as to the center round which that being revolves.

The foregoing train of thought naturally introduces us to the striking and beautiful illustration of our theme afforded in Philippians 2. In it we have a series of examples of self-surrender, commencing with a divinely perfect One, the Lord Himself.

Before we proceed to gaze upon this exquisite picture, it may be well to enquire what it was that rendered it needful to present such a picture before the Philippian saints. The attentive reader will observe in the course of this most charming epistle, certain delicate touches from the inspired pen, leading to the conclusion that the keen and vigilant eye of the apostle detected a certain root of evil in the bosom of the beloved and cherished assembly gathered at Philippi. To this he addresses himself, not with a sledge-hammer or a long whip, but with a refinement and delicacy far more powerful than either the one or the other. The mightiest moral results are reached by those delicate touches from the hand of God the Holy Spirit.

What was the root to which we have referred? It was not a splitting into sects and parties as at Corinth. It was not a return to the law and ritualism as at Galatia. It was not a hankering after philosophy and the rudiments of the world as at Colosse. What was it then? It was a root of envy and strife. The sprouting of this root is seen distinctly in the collision between those two sisters, "Euodias and Syntyche" (Phil. 4: 2), but it is glanced at in earlier portions of the epistle, and a divine remedy supplied.

It is a great point with a medical man not only to understand what is wrong with his patient, but also to understand the true remedy. Some physicians are clever in discovering the root of the disease, but they do not so well know what remedy to apply. Others are skilled in the knowledge of medicine, the powers of various drugs, but they do not know how to apply them to individual cases. The divine Physician knows both the disease and its remedy. He knows exactly what is the matter with us and He knows what will do us good. He sees the root of the matter and He applies a radical cure. He does not treat cases superficially. He is perfect in diagnosis. He does not guess at our disease from mere surface-symptoms. His keen eye penetrates at once to the very bottom of the case and His skillful hand applies the true remedy.

Thus it is in the epistle to the Philippians. Those saints held a very large place in the large heart of the apostle. He loved them much, and they loved him. Again and again he speaks in grateful words of their fellowship with him in the gospel from the very first. But all this did not and could not shut his eyes to what was wrong among them. It is said that "love is blind." In one sense, we look upon this saying as a libel upon love. If it were said that "love is superior to faults," it would be nearer the truth. What should anyone give for blind love? Of what use would it be to be loved by one who only loved us because he was ignorant of our blots and blemishes? If it be meant that love will not see our blots, it is blessedly true (Num. 23: 21), but no one would care for a love that was not at once aware of and

superior to our failures and infirmities.

Paul loved the saints at Philippi and rejoiced in their love to him, and tasted the fragrant fruit of that love again and again. But then he saw that it was one thing to love and be kind to a distant apostle, and quite another thing to agree among themselves. Doubtless, Euodias and Syntyche both contributed to send a present to Paul, though they were not pulling harmoniously together in the wear and tear of daily life and service. This is no uncommon case. Many sisters and brothers too are ready to contribute of their substance to help some distant servant of Christ, but they do not walk pleasantly together. How is this? There is a lack of self-surrender. This, we may rest assured, is the real secret of much of the “strife and vainglory” so painfully manifest in the very midst of the people of God. It is one thing to walk alone and it is another thing to walk in company with our brethren in the practical recognition of that great truth of the unity of the body and in the remembrance that “we are members one of another.”

Christians are not to regard themselves as mere individuals, as isolated atoms, as independent persons. This cannot be, seeing that Scripture declares, “There is one body” and we are members thereof. This is a divine truth — a grand fact — a positive reality. We are not to stand out in lonely individuality. We are living members of a living body, each one having to do with other members with whom we are connected by a bond which no power of earth or hell can sever. In a word, there is a relationship formed by the presence of the Holy Spirit who not only dwells in each individual member, but is the power of the unity of the one body. It is the presence of God the Spirit in the Church that constitutes that Church as the one living body of the living Head.

It is when we are called to walk in the actual acknowledgement of this great truth that there is a demand for self-surrender. If we were merely solitary individuals, treading each in his own self-chosen path, carrying out his own unique thoughts, walking in the sparks of his own kindling, pursuing his own unique line of things, indulging his own will, then indeed a quantity of self might be retained. If Euodias and Syntyche could have walked alone, there would have been no collision — no strife. But they were called to walk together, and here was the demand for self-surrender. And be it ever remembered that Christians are not members of a club, of a sect or of an association; they are members of a body, each connected with all, and all connected by the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the risen and glorified Head in heaven.

This is an immense truth, and the practical carrying out of it will cost us not only all we have, but all we are. There is no place in all the universe where self will be so pulled to pieces as in the Assembly of God. And is it not well? Is it not a powerful proof of the divine ground on which that Assembly is gathered? Should we not be glad to have our hateful self thus pulled to pieces? Shall we or ought we run away from those who do it for us? Are we not glad — do we not often pray to get rid of self? And shall we quarrel with those who are God's instruments in answering our prayers? True, they may do the work roughly and clumsily, but never mind that. Whoever helps me to crush and sink self does me a kind turn, however awkwardly he may do it. One thing is certain, no man can ever rob us of that which, after all, is the only thing worth having, namely Christ. This is a precious consolation. Let self go and we shall have the more of Christ. Euodias might lay the blame on Syntyche, and Syntyche on Euodias; the apostle does not raise the question of who was right or who was wrong, but he beseeches both to be “of the same mind in the Lord.”

Here lies the divine secret. It is self-surrender. But this must be a real thing. There is no use in talking about sinking self while at the same time, self is fed and patted on the back. We sometimes pray with fervor to be enabled to trample self in the dust, and the very next moment, if anyone seems to cross our path, self is like a porcupine with all its quills up. This will never do. God will have us real.

Surely we can say with all our weakness and folly, we want to be real — real in everything and therefore real when we pray for the power of self-surrender. But, most assuredly, there is no place where there is a more urgent demand for this lovely grace than in the bosom of the assembly of God.

We may range through the wide domain of inspiration and not find a more exquisite model of self-surrender than that which is presented to us in the opening lines of Philippians 2. It is impossible for anyone to breathe the holy atmosphere of such a scripture and not be cured of the sore evils of envy and jealousy, strife and vain glory. Let us approach the marvelous picture and, gazing intently upon it, seek to catch its inspiration.

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (vv. 1-8.)

Here then is the divine remedy for envy and jealousy, strife and vain glory — for self-occupation in all its hideous forms. The inspired penman introduces to our hearts the self-emptied, humble, obedient Man, Christ Jesus. Here was One who possessed all power in heaven and earth. Divine majesty and glory belonged to Him. He was God over all, blessed forever. By Him all things were made and by Him they subsist. And yet He appeared in this world as a poor man — a servant — one who had nowhere to lay His head. The foxes and the fowls, the creatures of His formation, were better provided for than He, their Maker. They had a place to rest. He had none. He thought of others, cared for them, labored for them, wept with them, ministered to them, but He never did a thing for Himself. We never find Him taking care to supply Himself with anything. His was a life of perfect self-surrender. He who was everything, made Himself nothing. He stood in perfect contrast to the first Adam who being but a man, thought to make himself like God, and became the serpent's slave. The Lord Jesus, the Most High God, took the very lowest place among men. It is utterly impossible that any man can ever take so low a place as Jesus. The word is, “He made himself of no reputation.” He went so low that no one could possibly put Him lower. “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Be it observed that the cross is here viewed as the consummation of a life of obedience — the completion of a work of self-surrender. It is what we may call, to use a Levitical term, the burnt-offering aspect of the death of Christ rather than the sin offering. True it is that the self-same act which consummated a life of obedience, also put away sin, but in the passage now before us, sin-bearing is not so much the thought as self-surrender. Jesus gave up all. He laid aside His glory and came down into this poor world. When He came, He shunned all human pomp and grandeur and became a poor man. His parents were poor. They were only able to procure the lowest grade of sacrifice which the law allowed for the poor; not a bullock, not a lamb, but a pair of turtle doves. Compare Leviticus 15: 29 and Luke 2: 24. He Himself worked and was known as a carpenter. Nor are we to miss the moral force of this fact by saying that every Jew was brought up to some trade. Our Lord Jesus Christ really took a low place. The very town where He was brought up was a proverb of reproach. He was called “The Nazarene.” And it was asked, with a sneer of contempt, “Is not this the carpenter?” He was a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty in man's eye. He was the despised, neglected, self-emptied, meek and lowly Man from first to last. He gave up all, even to life itself. His self-

surrender was complete.

Mark the result. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The blessed Lord Jesus took the very lowest place, but God has given Him the very highest. He made Himself nothing, but God has made Him everything. He said, “I am a worm and no man,” but God has set Him as Head over all. He went into the very dust of death, but God has placed Him on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

What does all this teach us? It teaches us that the way to get up is to go down. This is a grand lesson and one which we very much need to learn. It would effectively deliver us from envy and jealousy, from strife and vain glory, from self-importance and self-occupation. God will assuredly exalt those who, in the spirit and mind of Christ, take the low place. On the other hand, He will as assuredly abase those who seek to be somebody.

Oh! to be nothing! This is true liberty — true happiness — true moral elevation. What intense power of attraction in one who makes nothing of himself! On the other hand, how repulsive is a pushing forward, elbowing, self-exalting spirit! How utterly unworthy of one bearing the name of Him who made Himself of no reputation! It is a fixed truth that ambition cannot possibly live in the presence of One who emptied Himself. *An ambitious Christian is a flagrant contradiction.*

There are other samples of self-surrender presented to us in Philippians 2; inferior to the divine model at which we have been gazing, for in this as in all things else, Jesus must have the pre-eminence. Still, though inferior and imperfect, they are deeply interesting and valuable to us. Look at Paul. See how deeply he had drunk into his Master's spirit of self-surrender. Hear the following words from one who, naturally, would have allowed none to outstrip him in his career of ambition. “Yea,” he says, “and if I be poured forth [as a drink offering] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all” (v. 17).

This is uncommonly fine. Paul was ready to be nothing — to be spent — to be poured forth as a drink offering upon the Philippians' sacrifice. It mattered not to him who presented the sacrifice or who performed the service, provided the thing was done. Does not this put some of us to shame? How little do we know of this excellent spirit! How prone we are to attach importance to work if we ourselves have anything to do with it! How little we are able to joy and rejoice with others in *their* sacrifice and service! Our work, our preaching, our writings, have an interest in our view quite different from those of anyone else. In a word, self, self, detestable self, creeps in even in that which seems to be the service of Christ. We are drawn to those who think well of us and of our work, and retire from those who think otherwise. All this needs to be judged. It is unlike Christ and unworthy of those who bear His holy Name. Paul had so learned Christ as to be able to rejoice in the work and service of others as well as in his own; and even where Christ was preached of contention, he could rejoice.

Then look at Paul's son, Timothy. Harken to the glowing testimony borne to him by the pen of inspiration. “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (vv. 19-22).

Here was self-surrender. Timothy naturally cared for the saints; and that, too, at a moment when

all sought their own things. And yet, dear as Timothy was to Paul's heart — valuable as such a self-denying servant must have been to him in the work of the gospel, he was willing to part with him for the sake of the Church. Timothy, likewise, was willing to be separated from his invaluable friend and father in the faith in order to ease his anxious mind in reference to the state of the Philippians. This was indeed giving proof of real devotedness and self-surrender. *Timothy did not talk of these things; he practiced them.* He did not make a parade of his doings, but Paul by the Holy Spirit engraved them on a tablet from which they can never be erased. This was infinitely better. Let another praise you and not yourself. Timothy made nothing of himself, but Paul made a great deal of him. This is divine. The sure way to get up is to go down. Such is the law of the heavenly road.

A man who makes much of himself saves others the trouble of doing so. There is no possible use for two persons doing the same thing. Self-importance is a noxious weed nowhere to be found in the entire range of the new creation. It is, alas, often found in the ways of those who profess to belong to that blessed and holy creation, but it is not of heavenly growth. It is of fallen nature — a weed that grows luxuriantly in the soil of this world. The men of this age think it laudable to push and make way for themselves. A bustling, self-important, pretentious style takes with the children of this generation. But our heavenly Master was the direct opposite of all this. He who made the worlds, stooped to wash the disciples' feet (John 13); and if we are like Him, we will do the same. There is nothing more foreign to the thoughts of God, the mind of heaven, the spirit of Jesus, than self-importance and self-occupation. On the other hand, there is nothing that savors so of God, of heaven and of Jesus as self-surrender.

Look once more at our picture in Philippians 2. Examine with special care that figure which occupies a very prominent place. It is Epaphroditus. Who was he? Was he a great preacher — a very eloquent speaker — a pre-eminently gifted brother? We are not told. But this we are told, and told powerfully and touchingly; he was one who exhibited a lovely spirit of self-surrender. This is better than all the gifts and eloquence, power and learning that could possibly be concentrated in any single individual. Epaphroditus was one of that illustrious class who seek to make nothing of themselves. As a consequence the inspired apostle spares no pains to exalt him. See how he writes in detail about the actings of this singularly attractive person. “Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”

What a cluster of dignities! What a brilliant array of titles! How little did this dear and unpretentious servant of Christ imagine that he was to have such a monument erected to his memory! But the Lord will never permit the fruits of self-sacrifice to wither, nor the name of the self-emptied to sink into oblivion. Hence it is that the name of one who, otherwise, might never have been heard of, shines on the page of inspiration as the brother, companion and fellow soldier of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

What did this remarkable man do? Did he spend a princely fortune in the cause of Christ? We are not told, but we are told what is far better — he spent himself. This is the grand point for us to seize and ponder. It was not the surrender of his fortune merely, but the surrender of himself. Let us listen to the record concerning one of the True David's mighty men. “He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness.” Why? Was it because he was sick? Because of his pains and aches and privations? Nothing of the sort. Epaphroditus did not belong to the generation of whiners and complainers. He was thinking of others. “He was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.” How lovely! He was occupied with the Philippians and their sorrow about him. The only thing that affected him in his illness was the thought of how it would affect them. Perfectly exquisite! This honored servant of Christ

had brought himself to death's door to serve others, and when there, instead of being occupied about himself and his ailments, he was thinking of the sorrow of others. "He was sick and nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

Can anything be more morally beautiful than this? It is one of the rarest pictures ever presented to the human eye. There is Epaphroditus near to death for the sake of others, but he is full of sorrow about the Philippians, and the Philippians are full of sorrow about him; Paul is full of sorrow about both, and God comes and mingles Himself with the scene and in mercy to all, raises up the loved one from the bed of death.

Then mark the tender care of the blessed apostle. It is like some tender mother sending her darling son away and committing him with fond earnestness to the care of some friend. "I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation." Why? Was it because of his gifts, his rank or his wealth? No; but because of his self-surrender. "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." Oh! dear Christian reader, let us think on these things. We have introduced you to a picture and we leave you to gaze upon it. The grouping is divine. There is a moral line running through the entire scene and linking the figures into one striking group. It is like the anointing of the true Aaron, and the oil flowing down to the skirts of his garments. We have the blessed Lord, perfect in His self-surrender, as in all beside; and then we have Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, each in his measure exhibiting the rare and lovely grace of self-surrender.

RESTORATION

(John 21: 1-19)

A careful study of these verses will enable us to trace in them distinct kinds of restoration, namely restoration of conscience, restoration of heart and restoration of position.

The first of these, *restoration of conscience*, is all-important. It would be utterly impossible to over-estimate the value of a sound, clear, uncondemning conscience. A Christian cannot get on if there is a single blot on his conscience. He must walk before God with a pure conscience — a conscience without stain or sting. Precious treasure! May my reader ever possess it.

It is obvious that Peter possessed it in the touching scene "at the sea of Tiberias." Yet he had fallen — shamefully, grievously fallen. He had denied his Lord with an oath, but he was restored. One look from Jesus had broken up the deep fountains of his heart and drawn forth floods of bitter tears. Yet it was not his tears, but the love that drew them forth, which formed the ground of his thorough restoration of conscience. It was the changeless and everlasting love of the heart of Jesus — the divine effectiveness of the blood of Jesus — and the all-prevailing power of the advocacy of Jesus that imparted to Peter's conscience the boldness and liberty so strikingly and beautifully exhibited on the memorable occasion before us.

The risen Savior is seen in these closing chapters of John's Gospel, watching over His poor, foolish, feeble, erring disciples, hovering about their path, presenting Himself in various ways before them — taking occasion from their very necessities to make Himself known in perfect grace to their hearts. Was there a tear to be dried, a difficulty to be solved, a fear to be hushed, a bereaved heart to be soothed, an unbelieving mind to be corrected? Jesus was present in all the fullness and variety of His grace to meet all these things. So also when, under the guidance of the ever-forward Peter, they had

gone forth to spend a night in fruitless toil, Jesus had His eye upon them. He knew all about the darkness and the toil and the empty net, and there He was on the shore to kindle a fire and prepare a dinner for them. Yes, the selfsame Jesus who had died on the cross to put away their sins, now stood on the shore to restore them from their wanderings, gather them round Himself and minister to all their need. "Have ye any meat?" developed the fruitlessness of their night's toil. "Come and dine" was the touching expression of the tender thoughtful, all-providing love of the risen Savior.

Let us note the evidences of a thoroughly restored conscience as exhibited by Simon Peter. "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea." He could not wait for the ships or for his fellow disciples, so eager was he to get to the feet of his risen Lord. He did not say to John or to the others, "You know how shamefully I have fallen, and although I have since then seen the Lord and heard Him speak peace to my soul, yet I think it more becoming in one who has so fallen to keep back. You therefore go first and meet the blessed One and I shall follow after." Rather, he flings himself boldly into the sea as much as to say, "I must be the very first to get to my risen Savior; none has such a claim on Him as poor, stumbling, failing Peter."

Now, here was a perfectly restored conscience — a conscience without a single spot — a conscience basking in the sunlight of unchanging love. Peter's confidence in Christ was unclouded, and this, we may boldly affirm, was pleasing to the heart of Jesus. Love likes to be trusted. Let us always remember this. No one need imagine that he is honoring Jesus by standing afar off on the plea of unworthiness; yet it is very hard for one who has fallen or backslidden to recover his confidence in the love of Christ. Such an one can see clearly that a sinner is welcome to Jesus, no matter how great or many his sins may have been, but then he thinks the case of a backsliding or stumbling Christian is entirely different.

Should these lines be scanned by one who has backslidden or fallen, we would earnestly press upon him the importance of immediately returning to Jesus. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." What is the response to this pathetic appeal? "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God." "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto Me" (Jer. 3: 22; Jer. 4: 1). The love of the heart of Jesus knows no change. We change but He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever," and He delights to be trusted. The confidence of Peter's heart was a rich feast to the heart of Christ. No doubt, it is sad to fall, to err, to backslide, but it is sadder still, when we have done so, to distrust the love of Jesus or His gracious readiness to take us to His bosom again.

Beloved reader, have you fallen? Have you erred? Have you backslidden? Have you lost the sweet sense of divine favor, the happy consciousness of acceptance with God? If so, what are you to do? Simply this, Return! This is God's own special word to the backslider. Return in self-judgment and in the fullest confidence in the boundless, changeless love of the heart of Christ. Do not, we beseech you, keep away in the distance of your own unbelief. Do not measure the heart of Jesus by your own thoughts. Let Him tell you what is in His heart toward you. You have sinned, you have failed, you have turned aside, and now, it may be, you are afraid or ashamed to turn your eyes toward the One whom you have grieved and dishonored. Satan also is suggesting the darkest thoughts, for he would seek to keep you at a chilling distance from that precious Savior who loves you with an everlasting love. But you have only to fix your gaze upon the blood, the advocacy, the heart of Jesus, to get a triumphant answer to all the enemy's terrible suggestions and to all the infidel reasonings of your own heart. Do not, therefore, go on another hour without seeking to get a thorough settlement of the question between your soul and Christ. Remember, "His is an unchanging love, free and faithful, strong as death." Remember also His own words, "Return, ye backsliding children" — "Return to Me." Finally,

remember that Jesus loves to be trusted.

Secondly, the *heart* has to be restored as well as the conscience. Let this not be forgotten. It often happens in the history of souls that though the conscience may be perfectly clear as to certain acts which we have done, yet the roots from where those acts have sprung have not been reached. The acts appear on the surface of daily life, but the roots are hidden down deep in the heart, unknown to ourselves and others, but thoroughly exposed to the eye of Him with whom we have to do.

Now, these roots must be reached, exposed and judged before the heart is in a right condition in the sight of God. Look at Abraham. He started on his course with a certain root in his heart, a root of unbelieving reserve in reference to Sarah. This thing led him astray when he went down into Egypt. Although his conscience was restored and he got back to his altar at Bethel, yet the root was not reached for years afterwards in the affair of Abimelech, king of Gerar.

All this is deeply practical and most solemn. It finds its illustration in Peter as well as in Abraham. Mark the exquisitely delicate way in which our blessed Lord proceeds to reach the roots in the heart of His dear and honored servant, Peter. "So when they had dined." Not till then. There was no allusion to the past, nothing that might cause a chill to the heart or bring a cloud over the spirit while a restored conscience was fasting in company with a love that knows no change. This is a fine moral trait. It characterizes the dealings of God with all His saints. The conscience is set at rest in the presence of infinite and everlasting love, before there is the most distant illusion to the roots of things in the heart. When Simon Peter, in the full confidence of a restored conscience, flung himself at the feet of his risen Lord, he was called to listen to that gracious invitation, "Come and dine." But "when they had dined," Jesus took Peter apart to let in upon his soul the light of truth, so that by it he might discern the root from where all his failure had sprung. That root was self-confidence which had led him to place himself above his fellow-disciples and say, "Though all should deny Thee, yet will not I."

This root had to be exposed. Therefore, "When they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" This was a pointed and strong question, and it went right to the very bottom of Peter's heart. Three times Peter had denied his Lord and three times his Lord now challenges the heart of Peter, for the roots must be reached if any permanent good is to be done. It will not do merely to have the conscience purged from the effects which have been produced in practical life, there must also be the moral judgment of that which produced them. This is not sufficiently understood and attended to. Hence, again and again the roots spring up and bring forth fruit, and scatter their seed a thousand-fold around us, thus cutting out for us the most bitter and sorrowful work which might all be avoided if the roots of things were thoroughly judged and kept under.

Christian reader, our object in this article is entirely practical. Let us exhort one another to judge our roots, whatever they may be. Do we know our roots? Doubtless, it is very hard to know them. They are deep and many; pride, personal vanity, covetousness, irritability, ambition — these are some of the roots of character, the motive-springs of action, over which a rigid censorship must ever be exercised. We must let nature know that the eye of self-judgment is continually upon it. We have to carry on the struggle without stopping. We may have to lament over occasional failure, but we must maintain the struggle, for *struggle* is the evidence of life. May God the Holy Spirit strengthen us for the ceaseless conflict.

Lastly, we shall close with a brief reference to restoration as bearing upon the soul's position or path. The conscience being thoroughly purged and the heart with its varied roots, judged, there is moral preparedness for our proper path. The perfect love of Jesus had expelled all fear from Peter's

conscience; His threefold question had opened up the roots in Peter's heart, and now He says to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hand and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spoke He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, follow Me."

Here we have in two words the path of the servant of Christ. "Follow Me." The Lord had just given Peter the sweetest pledges of His love and confidence. He had, notwithstanding all past failure, entrusted him with the care of all that was dear to His loving heart in this world, even the lambs and sheep of His flock. He had said to him, "If you have affection for Me, feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep," and now, in one brief but comprehensive utterance, He opens before him his proper path. "Follow Me." This is enough. It includes all beside.

If we want to follow Jesus, we must keep the eye continually upon Him; we must mark His footprints and tread therein. Yes, mark them and walk in them; and when tempted like Peter to "turn about" to see what this one or that one has to do, or how he does it, we may hear the correcting words, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." This is to be our one grand and all-absorbing business, come what may. A thousand things may arise to distract and hinder. The devil will tempt us to look here and there, to look at this one and that one, to imagine we could do better here than there or there than here, to be occupied with and imitate the work of some fellow-servant. All this is met by those pointed words, "Follow Me."

There is immense danger in the present day of following in the wake of others, of doing certain things *because* others do them, or doing things *as* others do them. All this has to be carefully guarded. It will be sure to come to nothing. What we really want is a broken will — the true spirit of a servant who waits on the Master to know His mind. Service does not consist in doing this or that, or running here and there; it is simply doing the Master's will, whatever that may be. "They serve who stand and wait." It is easier to be busy than to be quiet. When Peter was "young," he went where he would, but when he got "old" he went where he would not. What a contrast between the young, restless, ardent, energetic Peter, going where he would, and the old, matured, subdued, experienced Peter going where he would not. What a mercy to have the will broken! To be able to say from the heart, "*What* Thou wilt, *as* Thou wilt, *where* Thou wilt, *when* Thou wilt." "Not My will, but Thine, O Lord, be done."

"Follow Me." Precious words! May they be engraved on our hearts, beloved reader. Then shall we be steady in our course and effective in our service. We shall not be distracted or unsettled by the thoughts and opinions of men. It may be we will get very few to understand us or sympathize with us — few to approve or appreciate our work. It matters not. The Master knows all about it. Let us only be sure of what He has told us to do, and *do* it. If a master tells one of his servants to go and do a certain thing or occupy a certain post, it is his business to go and do that thing, or occupy that post, no matter what his fellow-servants may think. They may tell him he ought to be somewhere else or to do something else. A proper servant will not listen to them, for he knows his master's mind and has to do his master's work.

Would it were more thus with all the Lord's servants! Would that we all knew more distinctly and carried out more decidedly the Master's will respecting us. Peter had his path and John had his. James had his work and Paul had his. So it was of old, the Gershonite had his work and the Merarite had his; and if one had interfered with the other, the work could not have been done. The Tabernacle was carried forward or set up by each man doing his own proper work. Thus it is in this our day. God has varied workmen in His house and in His vineyard. He has quarrymen, stone-squarers, masons and

decorators. Are all quarrymen? Surely not, but each has his work to do, and the building progresses by each one doing his own appointed work. Should a quarryman despise a decorator or a decorator look down with contempt upon a quarryman? Assuredly not. The Master wants them both, and whenever the one interferes with the other, as we so often do, the faithful correcting word falls on the ear, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

DELIVERANCE

When a Christian dies and goes to heaven he is completely delivered from the power of sin. It is manifestly impossible that sin can have any power or authority over a dead man. But it is not so readily seen or admitted that the believer, even now, is as thoroughly delivered from the *power* of sin as though he were dead and gone to heaven. Sin has no more dominion over a Christian than over a man who is actually dead and buried.

We speak of the *power* of sin, not of its presence. Let the reader carefully note this. Regarding the question of sin, there is this material difference between a Christian here and hereafter. Here, he is delivered only from the power of sin; hereafter he will be freed from its presence. In his present condition sin dwells in him, but it is not to reign. By-and-by, it will not even dwell. The reign of sin is over and gone. The reign of grace has begun. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

And, be it carefully observed, the apostle is not speaking in Romans 6 of the forgiveness of sins, which he treats in Romans 3. Blessed be God, our sins are all forgiven — blotted out — eternally cancelled. But in chapter 6 the theme is not forgiveness of sins, but complete deliverance from sin as a ruling power or principle.

How do we obtain this immense favor? By death. We have died to sin — died in the death of Christ. Is this true of every believer? Yes, of every believer beneath the canopy of heaven. Is it not a matter of attainment? By no means! It belongs to every child of God, every true believer. It is the common standing of all. Blessed, holy standing! All praise to Him who has earned it for us and brought us into it! We live under the glorious reign of grace — "grace which reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

This liberating truth is little understood by the Lord's people. Very few get beyond the forgiveness of sins, if they even get that far. They do not see their full deliverance from the power of sin. They feel its pressure, and arguing from their painful feeling instead of reckoning themselves to be what God tells them they are, they are plunged into doubt and fear as to their conversion. They are occupied with their own inward self-consciousness instead of with Christ. They are looking at their *state* in order to get peace and comfort, and thus they are and must be miserable. We will never get peace if we seek it in our spiritual state or condition. The way to get peace is to believe that I've died with Christ, was buried with Him, was raised with Him, am justified in Him, accepted in Him. In short that, "As He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4: 17).

This is the solid basis of peace. And not only so, but it is the only divine secret of a holy life. We are dead to sin. We are not called to make ourselves dead. We are so in Christ. A monk, a lover of beauty, or an ardent striver after sinless perfection may try to put sin to death by various bodily exercises. What is the inevitable result? Misery! Yes, misery in proportion to the earnestness. How different is Christianity! We start with the blessed knowledge that we are dead to sin, and in the blessed faith of this we count as dead, not the body but its "deeds."

May the reader enter by faith into the power of this full "deliverance!"

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

(READ LUKE 10: 25-35)

We desire to dwell for a little upon two grand questions which are suggested and answered in our Lord's interview with the lawyer, namely, What is written in the law? What is revealed in the gospel? These questions have only to be named to secure the attention and awaken the interest of every intelligent and thoughtful reader. It is surely most needful to understand the object, nature and range of the law; and in no way can these things be so clearly seen as when examined in contrast with the glorious gospel of God's free grace in Christ. Let us then proceed to enquire,

What Is Written In The Law?

This question may be very simply answered. The law reveals what man ought to do. This is what is written in the law. We often hear it said that "The law is the transcript of the mind of God." This definition is altogether defective. What idea should we have of God were we to regard "the ten words" uttered on the top of Mount Sinai, mid thunderings and lightnings, blackness, darkness and tempest, as the transcript of His mind? How should we know God if "the ministration of death and condemnation, written and engraven in stones," is the transcript of His mind? May we not, with great justice, inquire of the framers of the above most objectionable definition, "Is there nothing in the mind of God except death and condemnation? Is there nothing in the mind of God except thou shalt and thou shalt not? If there be more than these, then it is a mistake to affirm that "The law is the transcript of the mind of God." If it be said that "The law declares the mind of God as to what man ought to do," we have no objection to offer, for that is what we hold the law to be. But then, let the reader remember that the declaration of what man ought to do and the revelation of what God is, are two totally different things. The former is the law, the latter is the gospel. Both are perfect — divinely perfect — but they stand in vivid contrast; the one is perfect to condemn, the other is perfect to save.

Let us see how this point is unfolded in the scripture before us. "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, what is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

It in no wise interferes with the teaching of this passage to say that the lawyer stood up with the wicked intention of tempting Christ, or that he could flippantly and unfeelingly repeat what was written in the law. What we have to see is this, that the great law-question, "What must I do?" is here proposed and answered. If a man is to get life by keeping the commandments, he must keep them. There is no mystery about this. It is so plain that the question is, "How readest thou?" A man has only to read Exodus 20 to know his duty toward God and his duty toward his neighbor.

But, then, dear reader, the solemn inquiry is, "Have I done my duty? Have I loved God with all my heart and my neighbor as myself?" Alas! Alas! I have not; far, very far from it. I have proved times without number that I loved many things which are quite contrary to God; that I have indulged in lusts and pleasures which God condemns; that my will is most thoroughly opposed to God's will; that I hate the things which He loves, and love the things which He hates. In a word, it is perfectly manifest that I have not loved God with all my heart, that I have not given Him a single affection of my heart. And as to my neighbor, have I loved him as myself? Have I, at all times and under all circumstances, as carefully sought to promote my neighbor's interests as though they were my own? Have I rejoiced as unfeignedly in his prosperity as in my own? I dare not answer in the affirmative. I have only to bow my head and confess that I have utterly and shamefully failed in my duty both toward God and toward my

neighbor. I own it most fully to be my duty to love God with all my heart and my neighbor as myself, but I own as fully that I have done neither the one nor the other.

What then can the law do for me? Curse me and slay me on the spot! Is there no mercy? Not in the law! There is no mercy at Mount Sinai. If a man stands before that fiery mount, the tremendous alternative is duty or damnation. There is no middle ground. "This do, and thou shalt live" is the solemn, conclusive and emphatic language of the law. "The man that doeth these things shall live in them," but on the other hand, "cursed is everyone (without a single exception) that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10). "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (Heb. 10: 28).

The law makes no provision for imperfect obedience, however sincere. It makes no allowance for infirmity. Its one brief, pointed inquiry is, "Have you continued in all things?" If you say No (and who can say otherwise?) it can only curse you. Why? *Because it is perfect.* Were it to pass over a single transgression, it would not be a perfect law. Its very perfection insures the condemnation of the transgressor. "As many as are of works of law (that is, as many as work on the principle, stand on the ground, occupy the platform of works of law) are under the curse," and cannot possibly be anything else. This establishes the point unanswerably. The law can only prove to be a ministration of death and condemnation to the sinner, simply because he is a sinner and "the law is holy, and just, and good." It is no use for a man to say, "I am not looking to the law for life or justification, but merely as a rule and for sanctification." As a rule for what? For the sanctification of what? If you say, "for my old nature," the answer is, so far from being "a rule of life," it is "a ministration of death;" and so far from sanctifying the flesh, it condemns it, root and branch. If, on the other hand, you say it is for the new nature, then is your mistake equally obvious, since the apostle expressly declares that "the law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. 1: 9).

This is plain enough for anyone who is content to take the Holy Scriptures as his guide. The law can neither be the ground of life nor the rule of life to a fallen creature; neither can it be the ground of righteousness nor the power of sanctification. "By deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 20). This one passage is conclusive both as to justification and sanctification. No flesh can be justified in God's sight by the law; and as to sanctification, how can I ever become holy by means of that which only shows me my ungodliness? If I measure a short board by a true measure I must prove it short. A true measure cannot make a short board the proper length, it can only show what it is. Just so with the law and the sinner. Again, "The law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4: 15). How is this? Because it is pure and I am impure.

The law and the sinner are complete opposites — wholly irreconcilable. I must get a new nature, stand upon new ground, be in the new creation, before I can delight in the law of God. "I delight in the law of God *after the inward man*" (Rom. 7: 22). But how do I get this "inward man," this new nature? How do I get into the new creation? Not by works of law of any shape or description, but by faith of Jesus Christ. I become united to Christ in the power of a new and endless life, upon which the law has no claim. I died in Christ. Hence the law has no further demand on me. If a man is in prison for murder and dies there, the law is done with him, inasmuch as the life in which the crime was committed is gone. Thus it is with the sinner who believes in Jesus. God sees him to be dead. His old man is crucified. The sentence of the law has been put into execution upon him in the Person of Christ. Had it been executed upon himself, it would have been death eternal, but having been executed upon Christ, His death is of infinite, divine and eternal effectiveness. Moreover, having the power of eternal life in Himself, He rose, as a Conqueror from the tomb after having met every claim. And wonderful to declare, the believer, having died in Him, now lives in Him forever. Christ is his life; Christ is his

righteousness; Christ is his rule of life; Christ is his model; Christ is his hope; Christ is his all and in all (Rom. 6, 7; Gal. 2: 20-21; Gal. 3, Gal. 4; Eph. 2: 4-6; Col. 2: 10-15).

Some may feel disposed to inquire, "If the law cannot yield life, furnish righteousness or promote sanctification, then for what end was it given?" The apostle anticipates and answers this question. "Wherefore then the law? It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3: 19). We also read, "Moreover, the law entered (or came in by the way, between the promise and the accomplishment) that the offense might abound" (Rom. 5: 20). These two passages declare in simplest terms the object of the law. It is not said, "the law entered in order that we might get life, righteousness or sanctification by it," but quite the opposite. It was "because of transgression" and "that the offense might abound." Where is it said in Scripture that the law was given that we might get life, righteousness or sanctification by it? Nowhere. But it is expressly declared that "the law was added because of transgression" and that "it came in by the way that the offense might abound." It is not possible to conceive two objects more diverse.

The legal system speaks of life, righteousness and sanctification by law; the Scripture, on the contrary, speaks of "offense," "transgression" and "wrath." Why? Because we are sinners and the law is holy. It demands strength and we are weak; it demands life in order to keep it, and we are dead; it demands perfection in all things, and we are perfect in nothing; it is holy and just and good, and we are unholy, unjust and bad. Thus it stands between us and the law; and it matters not in the least, regarding the principle of the law, whether we are regenerate or unregenerate, believers or unbelievers, saints or sinners. The law knows nothing of any such distinctions. It is addressed to man in the flesh, in his old-Adam condition, in his old-creation standing. It tells him what he ought to do for God, and inasmuch as he has not done that, it curses him: it cannot do anything else. It shows him no mercy, but leaves him in the place of death and condemnation.

Thus much as to "what is written in the law." Let us now proceed to inquire in the second place,

What Is In The Gospel?

This is unfolded with uncommon beauty and power in the touching parable of "the Good Samaritan." The lawyer, like all legalists, "willing to justify himself," sought to ascertain who was his neighbor. In reply, our blessed Lord draws a picture in which is most vividly presented the true condition of every sinner, be he lawyer or else. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead." What a picture of man's career and man's condition! "A certain man" — the writer or the reader of these lines — "went down." How true! Reader, is it not so? Has not your course ever been a downward one? Have you ever, when left to yourself, taken a step upward, a step in the right direction? There is no use in generalizing, in making statements about mankind, the whole human race, Adam's posterity and the like. What we want is to bring the matter home to ourselves and say, each for himself, "I am the 'certain man' of this beautiful parable; it is myself that appears in the foreground of this masterly picture; my course has been a downward one; I have gone down from the innocency of childhood to the folly of youth, and from the folly of youth to the matured wickedness of manhood, and here I am, stripped of every shred in which I might wrap myself; wounded in every region of my moral being; and having the painful consciousness that death has already begun its terrible work in me."

Such is the career, such the condition of every sinner — his career, downward — his condition, death. What is to be done? Can he keep the law? Alas! he is not able to move. Can the "priest" do anything for him? Nothing! He has no sacrifice and no ability to rise and get one. Can the "Levite" not help him? No! He is so polluted with his wounds and bruises that neither Levite nor priest could touch

him. In a word, neither law nor ordinances can meet his case. He is utterly ruined. He has destroyed himself. The law has flung him overboard as a defiled, good-for-nothing, condemned thing. It is useless talking to him about the law or asking him will he take it as a means of justification, a rule of life or the power of sanctification. It has cursed, condemned and set him aside altogether, and he has only to cry out from the profound and awful depths of his moral ruin, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Now, it is when a man is really brought to this point that he is in a position to see the moral grandeur of the gospel. It is when he has discovered his own guilt, misery and ruin, and also his entire inability to meet the just and holy claims of the law, or profit in any wise by the appliances of the legal system in its most attractive forms, that he is prepared to appreciate the ample provisions of the grace of God.

These facts are most strikingly illustrated in the scene before us. When the poor man had gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho, from the city of God to the city of the curse (Joshua 6: 26; 1 Kings 16: 33-34); when he lay stripped, wounded and half-dead; when both priest and Levite had turned from him and gone their way; it was just then that he was in a position to prove the grace of the Good Samaritan who assuredly is none other than the blessed Lord Jesus Himself, blessed forever be His precious name! He appears in the form of a Samaritan only to enhance the grace that breathes forth upon our souls in this lovely scene. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Hence, had the Jew in this parable had sufficient strength, he would not, we may safely affirm, have permitted the stranger to touch him. But he was so far gone, so powerless, so under the power of death, that the gracious Samaritan had it all his own way. And what a tender way it was!

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Here is what is revealed in the gospel. Man has ruined himself. He has gone down from God. He has fallen under the power of the enemy. He is the victim of Satan, the slave of sin, the subject of death. His case is hopeless, so far as he is concerned. But, blessed be God, the true Samaritan has come down into all the ruin. The Son of God left His Father's bosom, His eternal dwelling-place, came down into this world to remedy our ruin, to bear our guilt, to endure the wrath of God in our place. All this He did, beloved reader, as the expression of His own tender compassion and love. "He had compassion" and came to bind up our wounds, to pour "the wine and oil" of His own most precious grace into our souls, to heal, restore and bless us, to put us into His own position according to the power which had brought Him into ours, to make ample provision for all our need until that bright and happy moment when we shall be ushered into His presence to go no more out forever.

The page of inspiration does not present a more touching picture than that which the Master's pen has drawn for us in "The Good Samaritan." It is perfectly beautiful and beautifully perfect. It is divine. Every expression is filled with exquisite moral loveliness. "He came where he was" — not half-way or nine-tenths of the way, but all the way. "And when he saw him," what then? Did he turn away in disgust at his appearance and despair of his condition? Ah! no; "He had compassion on him." His tender heart yearned over him. He cared not what he was or who he was. Jew or Gentile, it mattered not; the streams of tender compassion came gushing up from the deep fountains of a heart that found its own delight in ministering to every form of human need. Was this "compassion" a mere movement of

sentimentality — a momentary feeling uttering itself in empty words and then passing away? No; it was a real, living, acting thing, expressing itself in the most unmistakable manner. “He went to him.” For what? To meet his every need and not to leave him until he had placed him in a position of security, rest and blessing.

Nor was this all. Not only did this gracious stranger fully meet the wounded one's present need, but before leaving, he spoke these touching words, “Take care of him.” How this must have melted the poor man's heart. Such kindness! And all from a stranger, from one with whom he would naturally have “no friendly dealings.”

Finally, as if to complete the picture, he says, “when I come again.” He awakens in the heart by these last words, “the blessed hope” of seeing him again. What a lovely picture! And yet it is all a divine reality. It is the simple story of our blessed Jesus who, in His tender compassion, looked upon us in our low and utterly hopeless condition, left His eternal dwelling-place of light and love, took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, was made of a woman, made under the law, lived a spotless life, and fulfilled a perfect ministry down here for 33 years, and finally died on the cross as a perfect atonement for sin so that God might be just and the Justifier of any poor, ungodly, convicted sinner that simply trusts in Jesus.

Yes, dear reader, whoever you are, high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, Jesus has done all this; and He is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The One who was nailed to the cross for us, is now on the throne. Eternal Justice has wreathed His sacred brow with the wreath of victory, and that, be it remembered, on our behalf. Nor is this all. He has said, “I will come again.” Precious words! Would *you* be glad to see Him? Do you know Him as the Good Samaritan? Have you felt His loving hand binding up your spiritual wounds? Have you known the healing virtues of His oil, and the restoring, invigorating, and cheering influence of His wine! Have you heard Him speak the thrilling words, “Take care of him?” If so, then, surely, you will be glad to see His face: you will cherish in your heart's tender affections the blessed hope of seeing Him as He is and of being like Him and with Him forever. The Lord grant it may be so with you, beloved reader, and then you will be able to appreciate the immense difference between the law and the gospel — between what we ought to do for God and what God has done for us — between what we are to Him and what He is to us — between “do and live” and “live and do” — between “the righteousness of the law” and “the righteousness of faith.”

May the blessing of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit rest upon the reader of these lines, now, henceforth and forevermore!

DEAD TO THE LAW

“For I through law, am dead to law, that I might live to God” (Gal. 2: 19). This is a weighty word and much needed just now. The spiritual apprehension of the truth set forth will preserve the soul from two errors which are very common in the professing Church — legality on the one hand and licentiousness on the other. Were we to compare these two evils, were we compelled to choose between them, we would undoubtedly prefer the former. We would much rather see a man under the authority of the law of Moses than one living in lawlessness and self-indulgence. Of course, we know that neither is right and that Christianity gives us something quite different, but we have much more respect for a man who, seeing nothing beyond Moses and regarding the law of Moses as the only divine standard by which his conduct is to be regulated, bows down in a spirit of reverence to its authority, than for one who seeks to get rid of that law so he may please himself. Thank God, the truth of the gospel gives us the divine remedy for both cases. But how? Does it teach us that the law is dead? No! What then? It

teaches that the *believer* is dead. "I through law am dead to law." And to what end? That I may please myself? That I may seek my own profit and pleasure? By no means, but "that I may live to God."

Here lies the grand and all-important truth — a truth lying at the very base of the entire Christian system, and without which we can have no just sense of what Christianity is at all. So in Romans 7 we read, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also have become dead to the law (not the law is dead) by the body of Christ, in order that ye may be to another (not to yourselves, but) even to Him that was raised from the dead, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God" (v. 4). Again, "But now ye are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein ye were held, that ye might serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter" (v. 6). * Mark, it is that we may serve, not that we may please ourselves. We have been delivered from the intolerable yoke of Moses that we may wear the "easy yoke of Christ," not that we may give a loose run to nature.

{*The marginal reading of verse 6 is doubtless the correct one. It is well to note this, as also the difference between the way in which the apostle uses the illustration. It is the husband who dies, but in the application, it is the believer, not the law. Not seeing this had led many into the error of teaching that the law is dead, whereas in 1 Timothy 1: 8, the apostle expressly declares, not that the law is dead, but the very reverse; "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." And how is it to be used lawfully? "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless." It is of the utmost importance that the reader should be clear as to this.}

There is something shocking to a serious mind in the thought of men appealing to certain principles of the gospel to establish a plea for the indulgence of the flesh. They want to fling aside the authority of Moses, not that they may enjoy the authority of Christ, but merely to indulge self. But it is vain. It cannot be done with any shadow of truth, for it is never said in Scripture that the law is dead or abrogated, but it is said — and urged repeatedly — that the believer is dead to the law and dead to sin so he may taste the sweetness of living unto God, of having his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

We earnestly commend this weighty subject to the attention of the reader. He will find it fully unfolded in Romans 4 and Romans 5, Galatians 3 and Galatians 4. A right understanding of it will solve a thousand difficulties and answer a thousand questions, and deliver the soul from a vast mass of error and confusion. May God give His own Word power over the heart and conscience!

GRACE AND HOLINESS

Thank God we are under grace. But does this blessed fact weaken in any way the truth that "Holiness becometh God's house forever?" Has it ceased to be true that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints; and to be held in reverence of all those who are about Him?" Is the standard of holiness lower for the Church of God now than it was for Israel of old? Has it ceased to be true that "our God is a consuming fire?" Is evil to be tolerated because "we are not under law, but under grace?" Why were many of the Corinthians weak and sickly? Why did many of them die? Why were Ananias and Sapphira struck dead in a moment? Did that solemn judgment touch the truth that the Church was under grace? Assuredly not. But neither did grace hinder the action of judgment. God can no more tolerate evil in His assembly now, than He could in the days of Achan.

You say, "We must not draw comparisons between God's dealings with His earthly people and His dealings with His Church." What is the meaning of the following words in 1 Corinthians 10? "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that

spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.... Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Is not this drawing a comparison between God's dealings with His earthly people and His Church now? Yes indeed; and well will it be for us all to ponder and be admonished by the comparison. It would be sad indeed if we were to plead from the pure and precious grace in which we stand to lower the standard of holiness. We are called to purge out the old leaven on the blessed ground that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” Is not this “drawing a comparison?” The assembly at Corinth was commanded — woe be unto them if they had refused — to put away from among them the wicked person, to deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

True, they were not called to stone him or to burn him; and here we have a contrast rather than a comparison. But they had to put him out from among them if they would have the divine presence in their midst. “Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, *forever*.” Can you not praise Him for the holiness as well as the grace? Can you not, as the standard of holiness rises before you, add your doxology, “Blessed be His name forever and ever! Amen and amen?” We trust you can.

We must never forget that, while we stand in grace, we are to walk in holiness; and as regards the assembly, if we refuse to judge bad doctrine and bad morals, we are not on the ground of the Assembly of God at all. People say we must not judge; God says we must. “Do not ye judge them that are *within*? But them that are *without* God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” If the assembly at Corinth had refused to judge that wicked person, it would have forfeited all title to be regarded as the assembly of God, and all who feared the Lord would have had to leave it. It is a very solemn matter indeed to take the ground of the Assembly of God. All who do so have to bear in mind that it is not at all a question of whom we can receive or what we can tolerate, but what is worthy of God? We hear a great deal now-a-days about the “broad” and the “narrow;” *we have just to be as broad and as narrow as the Word of God.*

ISOLATION

It is one of our great difficulties at the present moment — indeed it has ever been a difficulty — *to combine a narrow path with a wide heart.* There is very much on all sides tending to produce isolation. We cannot deny it. Links of human friendship seem so fragile; so many things crop up to shake confidence; so many things which one cannot possibly sanction, that the path becomes more and more isolated.

All this is unquestionably true. But we must be very careful as to how we meet this condition of things. We have little idea how much depends on the spirit in which we carry ourselves in the midst of scenes and circumstances which, all must admit, are uniquely trying.

For example, I may retreat in upon myself and become bitter, gloomy, severe, repulsive, withered up, having no heart for the Lord's people, for His service, for the holy and happy exercises of the assembly. I may become barren of good works, having no sympathy with the poor, the sick, the sorrowful. I may live in the narrow circle in which I have withdrawn, thinking only of myself and my personal and family interests.

What can be more miserable than this? It is the most deplorable selfishness, but we do not see it because we are blinded by our inordinate occupation with other people's failures.

Now it is a very easy matter to find flaws and faults in our brethren and friends. But the question is, How are we to meet these things? Is it by retreating in upon ourselves? Never! To do this is to render ourselves as miserable in ourselves as we are worthless, and worse than worthless, to others. There are few things more pitiable than what we call “a disappointed man.” He is always finding fault with others. He has never discovered the real root of the matter or the true secret of dealing with it. He has retired, but within himself. He is isolated, but his isolation is utterly false. He is miserable; and he will make all who come under his influence — all who are weak and foolish enough to listen to him — as miserable as himself. He has completely broken down in his practical career; he has succumbed to the difficulties of his time and proved himself wholly unequal to meet the stern realities of actual life. Then, instead of seeing and confessing this, he retires into his own narrow circle and finds fault with everyone except himself.

How truly delightful and refreshing to turn from this dismal picture to the only perfect Man who ever trod this earth! His path was indeed an isolated one — none more so. He had no sympathy with the scene around Him. “The world knew Him not.” “He came unto His own [Israel], and His own received Him not.” “He looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but He found none.” Even His own beloved disciples failed to sympathize with, or understand Him. They slept on the mount of transfiguration in the presence of His glory and they slept in the Garden of Gethsemane in the presence of His agony. They roused Him out of His sleep with their unbelieving fears and were continually intruding upon Him with their ignorant questions and foolish notions.

How did He meet all this? In perfect grace, patience and tenderness. He answered their questions; He corrected their notions; He hushed their fears; He solved their difficulties; He met their need; He made allowance for their infirmities; He gave them credit for devotedness in the moment of desertion; He looked at them through His own loving eyes and loved them, notwithstanding all. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

Christian reader, let us seek to drink into our blessed Master's spirit and walk in His footsteps. Then our isolation will be of the right kind, and though our path may be narrow, the heart will be large.

A WORKMAN'S MOTTO

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15: 58).

Here we have an uncommonly fine motto for the Christian workman, and every Christian ought to be a workman. It presents a most valuable balance for the heart. We have immovable stability linked with unceasing activity.

This is of the utmost importance. There are some of us who are such sticklers for what we call *principle* that we seem almost afraid to embark in any scheme of large-hearted Christian activity. On the other hand, some of us are so bent on what we call *service* that in order to reach desired ends and realize noticeable results, we do not hesitate to overstep the boundary line of sound principle.

Now, our motto supplies a divine antidote for both these evils. It furnishes a solid basis on which we are to stand with steadfast purpose and immovable decision. We are not to be moved the breadth of a hair from the narrow path of divine truth, though tempted to do so by the most forcible argument of a plausible expediency. “To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.”

Noble words! May they be engraved in characters deep and broad on every workman's heart. They are absolutely invaluable, and particularly so in this our day when there is such willfulness in our mode of working, such erratic schemes of service, such self-pleasing, such a strong tendency to do that

which is right in our own eyes, such a practical ignoring of the supreme authority of Holy Scripture.

It fills the thoughtful observer of the present condition of things with the very gravest apprehensions as he sees the positive and deliberate throwing aside of the Word of God, even by those who professedly admit it to be the Word of God. We are not speaking of the insolence of open and avowed infidelity, but of the heartless indifference of respectable orthodoxy. There are millions who profess to believe the Bible is the Word of God, who, nevertheless, do not have the smallest idea of submitting themselves absolutely to its authority. The human will is dominant. Human reason bears sway. Expediency commands the heart. The holy principles of divine revelation are swept away like autumn leaves or the dust of the threshing-floor before the vehement blast of popular opinion.

How immensely valuable and important in view of all this, is the first part of our workman's motto! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable." The "therefore" throws the soul back upon the solid foundation laid in the previous part of the chapter in which the apostle unfolds the most sublime and precious truth that can possibly engage the Christian's heart — truth which lifts the soul completely above the dark and chilling mists of the old creation and plants it on the solid rock of resurrection. It is on this rock we are exhorted to be steadfast and immovable. It is not an obstinate adherence to our own notions — to some favorite dogma or theory which we have adopted — or to any special school of doctrine. It is not anything of this kind, but a firm grasp and faithful confession of the whole truth of God of which a risen Christ is the everlasting Center.

But we have to remember the other side of our motto. The Christian workman has something more to do than to stand firmly on the ground of truth. He has to cultivate the lovely activities of grace. He is called to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." *The basis of sound principle must never be abandoned, but the work of the Lord must be diligently carried on.* There are some who are so afraid of doing mischief that they do nothing; and others, who rather than not be doing something, will do wrong. Our motto corrects both. It teaches us to set our faces as a flint where truth is involved; while on the other hand, it leads us to go forth in largeness of heart and throw all our energies into the work of the Lord.

Let the Christian reader specially note the expression, "The work of the Lord." We are not to imagine for a moment that all which engages the energies of professing Christians is entitled to be designated "the work of the Lord." It is far from it! We see a mass of things undertaken as service for the Lord with which a spiritual person could not possibly connect the holy name of Christ. We desire to have the conscience exercised as to the work in which we embark. We deeply feel how needful it is in this day of willfulness, laxity and wild liberalism, to own the authority of Christ in all that we put our hands to, in the way of work or service. Blessed be His name, He permits us to connect Him with the most trivial and commonplace activities of daily life. We can even eat and drink in His holy name and to His glory. The sphere of service is wide enough; it is only limited by that weighty clause, "The work of the Lord." The Christian workman must not engage in any work which does not place itself under that most holy and all-important heading. He must, before he enters upon any service, ask himself this great practical question, "Can this honestly be called the work of the Lord?"